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DH on Saturday

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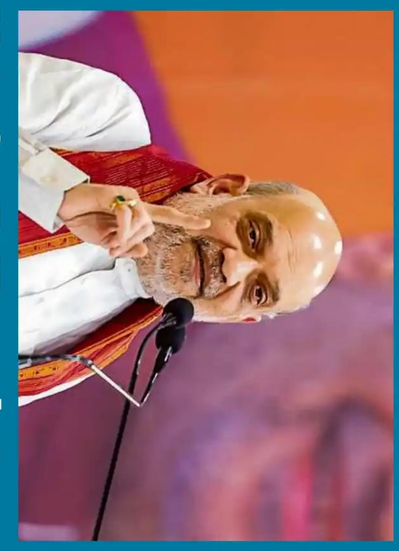
P11

Vote for BJP again to identify infiltrators: Shah in Assam



P4

Governor's address a 'colonial hangover': Suresh Kumar

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Scan for floor plans

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Venezuela's acting president Rodriguez dials PM Modi

P12

Short tunnel: BDA to dig up airport-bound road

Tenders floated for Rs 1,086-cr project; deadline 18 months

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

A section of the airport-bound Ballari Road will be dug up completely to build a six-lane entry and exit ramp to the proposed short tunnel that bypasses the congested Hebbal flyover.

As per the drawings, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) will excavate the 10-lane Ballari Road in front of Baptist Hospital for building the ramp that will connect the proposed six-lane underground (short tunnel) road between Hebbal Junction and University of Agriculture Sciences (UAS) staff quarters via Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU).

The underground road project – between Esteem Mall and Baptist Hospital – is estimated to cost Rs 1,086 crore, making it the costliest road infrastructure work in Bengaluru.

Following the recent state Cabinet approval, the BDA has floated tenders for construction work, with a deadline to complete the project in 18 months.

If all goes according to the BDA's plan, the work may begin by the end of this year.

While the BDA has proposed to acquire land to widen the road to minimise disruptions to the traffic, the excavation could increase travel time during the construction period.

The underground road project, which also includes construction of a railway underbridge, will adopt the cut and cover method, meaning no tunnel boring machine will be used.

It also means more disruption to the surface traffic.

A total of 545 trees will be affected, documents show.

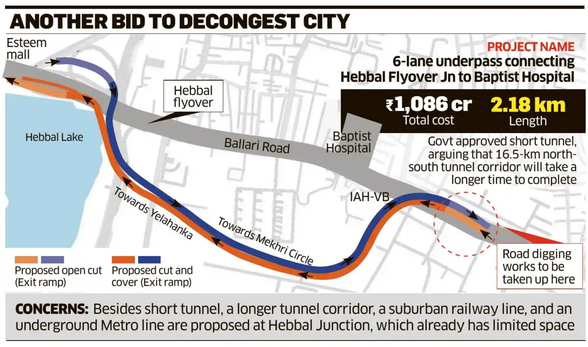
Multiple projects

Notably, the short tunnel is coming up on a stretch where authorities have proposed different projects in a bid to improve mobility.

While the BDA is building the short tunnel, its sister concern, Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (B-SMILE), has proposed a 16.5-km tunnel road between Silk Board and Hebbal.

What's more, the BMRCL has finalised a proposal to build an underground Metro corridor in the same area while K-RIDE is building a suburban rail project too.

Mobility experts have opposed the short tunnel, stating the proposal will not help in decongesting the traffic, especially when the stretch is already 10-lane wide. They also fear the roadwork will further delay the underground Metro project (Hebbal - Sarjapura) and even make construction difficult.



CONCERNS: Besides short tunnel, a longer tunnel corridor, a suburban railway line, and an underground Metro line are proposed at Hebbal Junction, which already has limited space

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BWSSB starts groundwater study ahead of summer

Measure part of action plan to address water shortage

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Aiming to ensure there is no water shortage in the city this summer, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has started preparations.

The board has prepared an action plan to address any shortage that could arise during the summer.

Among the major concerns officials are trying to address is the increase in demand that could result from the drying up of borewells.

To address this, the BWSSB has begun an analysis of groundwater levels in the city in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

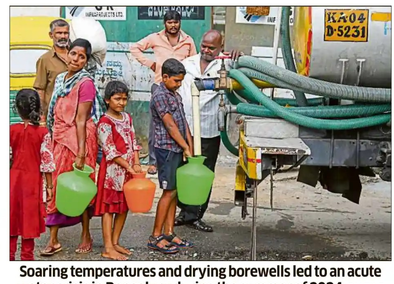
"The data will help us understand which areas might be under stress during the summer. We can start preparing now to address any shortfall," BWSSB Chairman Ramprasat Manohar V told *DH*.

Senior BWSSB officials told *DH* that many areas in the city's periphery heavily depend on borewell water and, as many are yet to take Cauvery water connections, these areas might face water shortage.

"Many of them are yet to take connections under Cauvery Stage V, though it was inaugurated nearly a year ago. Those areas might face some problems," the official said.

Officials have also been asked to identify areas which had water shortage in 2024.

"In 2024, we set up small water supply systems in many areas where the population of the urban poor was high. We will follow the same model this year as well," Manohar said.



Soaring temperatures and drying borewells led to an acute water crisis in Bengaluru during the summer of 2024. DH FILE

Sanchari Cauvery service

The BWSSB will also increase water supply through the Sanchari Cauvery service to areas that face water shortage.

"We will also ensure that the use of treated water is promoted extensively and aerators are installed on all taps in public places to reduce water wastage," Manohar added.

However, officials felt that the problems will become evident only if the summer is very harsh.

In 2024, the city experienced a harsh summer with temperatures reaching nearly 40 degrees Celsius. The demand for water increased due to the rise in temperature, while dry borewells increased dependence on Cauvery water.

As a result, the city faced an acute water crisis, forcing authorities to implement remedial measures.

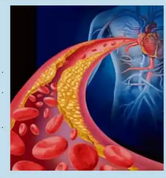
City doctors flag artery plaque risk in youngsters

Condition often detected only after heart attacks

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

SYMPTOMS

- Chest pain during physical activities
- Shortness of breath
- Intolerance to exercise and physical activities
- Momentary dizziness, blurry vision, and transient attacks with temporary loss of strength



Doctors in the city are noticing a rise in cases of atherosclerosis, or plaque in arteries, where fats, cholesterol, calcium and inflammatory cells build along artery walls, reducing blood flow and the supply of fresh blood to organs.

This condition is now especially observed among younger people.

As the condition progresses, arteries lose elasticity and may become completely blocked, causing heart attacks. The condition, seen largely in men, often occurs without symptoms and is noted only after heart attacks, some doctors said.

Dr Rajesh S, Vascular and Endovascular Surgeon, said, "Atherosclerosis is garnering attention more than ever before, as it is the primary cause of nearly all types of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), and makes CVDs the leading cause of death globally, including in India. A condition once considered to affect senior citizens is now seen in people in their 30s, 40s, or even younger."

Doctors said that while awareness about the disease has increased, misdiagnosis as a gastrointestinal issue is still common.

Dr Mukundan Seshadri, Senior Consultant, Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery, said, "There are instances of delayed diagnosis as we do not expect it in the younger crowd, and many patients would have already visited a gastroenterologist. When nothing is found in the report, they are often referred to cardiologists."

Dr Anusha A Rao, Consultant, Cardiology, said, "Diabetes is a pandemic in India and a major risk factor for macrovascular complications and heart attacks. Add to this the widespread unhealthy lifestyle, especially after Covid."

Atherosclerosis is not reversible and doctors can only try to arrest its progression. "Permanent damage occurs when artery deposits become severe and the artery narrows, leading to heart attacks," said Chirag D, Consultant, Interventional Cardiology.

UAV lands near house on Bengaluru outskirts; triggers panic

BENGALURU, DHNS: An unmarked, unmanned aerial vehicle landed on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Thursday, creating panic among residents, officials said on Friday.

Police said the UAV landed near a house in Palanjogihalli near Doddaballapura around 1.30 pm. Residents panicked as it was an unusual sight.

The local police were informed.

"Residents panicked as it was not a regular quad drone, which is usually seen during aerial photography or at weddings or other events," a police officer said.

Officials said that prima facie, it was found that the white UAV had a high definition 360-degree camera, but there were no signs or traces of explosives or any other dangerous material.

Since there were electronic components present inside, the UAV has been sent for forensic examination. A case has also been registered, the officer said.

NIA alerted

As per protocol, Central agencies, including the National Investigation Agency (NIA), were also alerted, police said. Sources in the state intelligence said that the drone could belong to the defence establishment or to students experimenting with technology.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Bengaluru Walkathon: Under the theme 'Health for All' by Samarthanam Trust; Kittur Rani Chennamma Stadium, Jayanagar; from 9 am onwards.

Vivekadeepti Programme: Vedanta Bharathi Vidushekara Bharathi Swamiji and Shankara Bharathi Swamiji; Krishnavihara, Palace Grounds; 11 am onwards.

Lecture: On DR Bendre's Poetry; Poets' Day; CR Gopalaswamy, SR Vijayashankar, Vivek Subbareddy; Organised by Bengaluru Advocates' Literary Association; City Civil Court; 1.30 pm.

Lecture Series: Poet Lakshmisha's 'Jaimini Bharata' by Pavagada Prakash Rao; Datta Vijayananda Tirtha Swamiji; Organised by Dr Pavagada Prakash Rao Amrita Mahotsava Committee; Patti Auditorium, Srirama Mandira, NR Colony; 5.45 pm.

Inauguration of Central Command Centre: G Parameshwara, Tushar Girinath, MA Saleem, KV Sharath Chandra, Alok Kumar; Karnataka Prisons and Correctional Services Headquarters, Gandhinagar; 4 pm.

CULTURAL

61st Nadajyoti Music Festival: S Aishwarya, S Soundarya (duet vocal concert), V Nalina Mohan (violin), Phanindra Bhaskar (mridangam), Sachin Devi Prasad (ghatam); Organised by Nadajyoti Music Sabha Trust; Srirama Mandira, East Park Road, Malleswaram; 6 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Partly cloudy sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	28.9°C
Minimum	16.6°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	40%
Sunset (Jan 31)	6:20 pm
Sunrise (Feb 1)	6:46 am
Moonrise	6:47 pm
Moonset	4:12 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy interacts with schoolchildren during the 18th 'My City Traffic Police Day' at the Traffic Police Park on Friday. DH PHOTO/BK JANARDHAN

My City Traffic Police Day: Students highlight civic duty

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a display of gratitude and civic awareness, more than 50 schoolchildren gathered at the Traffic Police Park on Friday to celebrate the 18th edition of "My City Traffic Police Day".

Organised by NGO CMCA (Children's Movement for Civic Awareness), the event aimed to acknowledge the tireless service of the city's traffic personnel, who work through heat, rain and rising pollution to keep Bengaluru moving.

The ceremony, attended by Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy, saw students from schools across the city presenting handmade thank you cards and roses to officers. The atmosphere was celebratory as students performed skits that depicted the daily struggles of the traffic police, from managing ambulance priorities to enduring the city's notorious noise levels.

Speaking at the event, Reddy emphasised that traffic management is not only the responsibility of the men in uniform, but a collective civic duty. "If every citizen follows the rules and maintains a proper civic sense, Bengaluru's traffic woes would drastically reduce," he said.

He encouraged students to be active citizens and to question unsafe habits at home, such as parents riding without helmets or jumping signals.

Priya Krishnamurthy, CEO of CMCA, noted that the event is the culmination of the yearlong Civic Club programme. "This is not just a one-day celebration, it is about teaching children their rights and responsibilities. By showing gratitude to our police, they learn the value of the rule of law and community care," she said.

The event concluded with a pledge by the students to follow traffic rules and act as ambassadors for road safety in their own neighbourhoods.

Infosys Foundation fest this weekend

BENGALURU, DHNS: Infosys Foundation has announced the second edition of 'Kala Dhwani: Echoes of India's Art and Culture', a festival celebrating the country's folk and tribal heritage, to be held till February 1 at Chamara Vajra, Palace Grounds.

The festival will be open to the public from 10 am on January 31 and February 1.

Kala Dhwani 2026 will feature cultural traditions from five regions of India — Assam, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra — with Karnataka as the host state.

More than 200 artists will present over 50 traditional art forms across three days, including Theyyam, Lavani, Bihu, Norata dance and Rouf.

Organised in collaboration with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), the festival aims to provide a platform for traditional artisans while engaging youth, art enthusiasts and the wider public in preserving India's cultural heritage.

DH on Saturday

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WHACKY VERSE

Mic drop

Young, sonorous Arijit Singh
Ruled the charts like a king.
Amid such big hits
He's calling it quits—
Was there any arm twisting?

Djokovic to meet Alcaraz in Aus Open final

38-year-old Serb rolls back the years to battle past Sinner

P19

Right to menstrual health a part of right to life: SC

Tells states & UTs to provide free sanitary napkins to girl students in all schools

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Friday held that the right to menstrual health is a part of the right to life and education under the Constitution as it directed all states and Union Territories to provide free sanitary napkins to girl students and ensure functional, gender-segregated toilets for students in all schools.

In a landmark judgment to ensure gender justice and educational equity, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said time is overripe that menstrual health is recognised as a shared responsibility rather than a woman's issue.

The court warned of stringent consequences for non-compliance of its orders, including de-recognition of private schools and holding state governments directly accountable for failures in public institutions.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health," Justice Pardiwala wrote for the bench.

With regard to availability of menstrual absorbent, the court directed that all states and Union Territories to ensure that every school in both urban and rural areas provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins free of cost.

The bench ordered that sanitary napkins should be made accessible to girl students, preferably within toilet premises, through vending machines, or, where such installation is not immediately visible, at a designated place or with a designated authority within schools.

The court also directed all states and UTs to ensure that every school, irrespective of whether government-run, aided or private, is provided with the functional gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity.

It said all the existing and newly constructed toilets in schools would be designed, constructed and maintained so as to ensure privacy and accessibility, including by catering to the needs of children with disabilities.

▸ Menstrual health, Page 6

APEX COURT'S DIRECTIONS

Sanitary napkins shall be made readily accessible, preferably within the toilet premises

- Govt should ensure every school has functional, gender-segregated toilets with usable water connectivity
- District education officers should conduct periodic inspections of school infrastructure
- NCPCR, SCPCRs to oversee implementation of directions
- Govts told to ensure compliance in three months
- Warns of stringent consequences for non-compliance

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health

SUPREME COURT

'HM helpless': HC seeks court-monitored probe into illegal sand mining

AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has directed the registration of suo motu proceedings after taking serious note of Home Minister G Parameshwara's statement in the legislature that "big people from all parties are involved in illegal sand extraction".

A division bench of Justices DK Singh and Tara Vitasta Ganju ordered a notice to the state government, observing that the matter required a court-monitored investigation, since the home minister expressed helplessness in taking action to curb illegal sand mining by mafias.

The bench took serious note of the statement made by the home minister in the legislative Assembly on January 27, 2026.

"Illegal sand mining is a big racket. I am not giving any explanation or naming anyone, as it is a little embarrassing. I have given only a restricted answer, but it involves many influential people. I will call a meeting to discuss the issue," the minister had said.

▸ Sand mining, Page 6

'Ready to quit if allegations true'

BENGALURU DHNS: Excise Minister R B Timmapur defended himself in the Legislative Council on Friday, saying he will retire from politics if graft allegations levelled against him are proved.

Replying to the corruption allegations, Timmapur said he had been targeted as he is a Dalit.

"The Opposition is conspiring against me, and if they provide proof, I will resign immediately," he said.

Details on Page 4

Confident Group's CJ Roy shoots himself dead in B'luru

I-T searches were on in office when tragedy took place

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a shocking incident, the founder and chairman of realty firm Confident Group, Roy Chiriankandath Joseph, was found dead at his office in Bengaluru on Friday.

CJ Roy

Police suspect Roy, 57, a native of Kochi in Kerala, shot himself, likely with a pistol, even as an inspection by the Income Tax (I-T) department's officials from Kerala was underway at his office in Langford Town near Richmond Circle. Popularly known as CJ Roy, he is survived by his wife and two children. Senior officers said the incident occurred between 3 pm and 3.15 pm at Roy's office.

▸ Roy, Page 6
Related reports, Page 3
Man kills parents, younger sister in Vijayapura, Page 5

Known for flamboyance

Roy, known among his circle as 'Vijay Mallya of Bengaluru' for his flamboyance, has produced movies, including the big-budget Casanova, starring Mohanlal in 2012. Roy also served as the Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic for Karnataka and Kerala.

Revisiting Champaran

DH goes to the ashram from where Gandhi led his first Satyagraha in India

India observed Martyrs' Day on January 30, marking the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 by Nathuram Godse. Gandhi's transformation into a mass leader in India began in the agrarian district of Champaran in Bihar. He arrived there in 1917 to support indigo farmers suffering under the oppressive policies of the British.

The Champaran Satyagraha, a familiar chapter in our history books, was the first time he applied his philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience on Indian soil. And within a year, the exploitative cultivation of indigo was abolished.

A *DH* journalist visited the Bhitiharwa Gandhi Ashram in Champaran, where Gandhi lived during the movement. But who brought Gandhi to Champaran in the first place?

Full story, Page 17

The SATURDAY STORY

Sunetra Pawar likely to be Maha Deputy CM

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Sunetra Pawar, wife of deceased NCP leader Ajit Pawar, is likely to be sworn in as the Maharashtra deputy chief minister, as the grieving party started discussions on the leadership transition.

The process to merge the NCP and NCP(SP) has also gathered steam, though leaders from Ajit's party are wary of the old warhorse, Sharad Pawar, again holding the reins. But Pawar is yet to reveal his mind on the thorny matter.

NCP leader Sunetra Pawar (right) during Ajit Pawar's last rites. PTI

Leaders and workers of the NCP and the NCP(SP) want Sunetra, 62, currently a Rajya Sabha member, to step into the shoes of her late husband.

In Mumbai, NCP working president Praful Patel, Maharashtra unit president Sunil Tatkare, veteran leader and minister Chhagan Bhujbal and MLA Dhananjay Munde held back-to-back meetings with CM Devendra Fadnavis. "Right now, the priority is to fill the vacant posts of the NCP legislature party leader and deputy chief minister, both held by Ajit Pawar at the time of his death," said Patel, the troubleshooter of the Pawar family. Sunetra Pawar.

▸ Sunetra, Page 5

Silver, gold prices nosedive after hitting record highs

NEW DELHI, PTI: Prices of silver and gold saw one of their steepest single-day fall in the past few months in futures trade on Friday as investors rushed to monetise their peaking investment value.

Silver futures crashed 17% to Rs 3.32 lakh per kg, while gold tanked 9% to Rs 1.54 lakh per 10 gm, tracking weak trends in the global markets and surging American currency.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver futures for March delivery plummeted by Rs 67,891, or 16.97%, to Rs 3,32,002 per kg, marking its steepest fall in a single day.

Similarly, gold futures also tumbled as investors booked heavy profits on the commodities bourse. The February contract nosedived by Rs 15,246, or 9%, to Rs 1,54,157 per 10%.

Manav Modi, Commodities Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said silver and gold prices have hit lower circuit levels in all formats, 'megas' and 'minis' contracts.

Cybercrime fight gets teeth as command centre likely in 3-4 months

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a significant step towards future-proofing investigations against cybercrimes, the Karnataka Cybercrime Command Centre (K4C) is all set to be established in the next three to four months.

Well-placed Karnataka Home Department sources confirmed to DH that K4C will be under the aegis of Cyber Command Centre (CCC), headed by Pronab Mohanty, Director General of Police (Cyber Command). The proposal is currently before the government.

"It will be like a hub and spoke model. The central command will be in Bengaluru, with centres in each district. The implementation will be done across four phases between 2025 and 2030," sources said.

The K4C will have the following verticles: Cyber, Economics and Narcotics (CEN), Cyber Forensics, Financial Forensics, Cyber Security Auditing, Crypto and Blockchain, Cybercrime Investigation, Engineering, DevOps, Data Analysis and Visualisation, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and AI and Machine Learning (AI&ML).

"K4C will be the beating heart and the hub of the CCC. There will be four units: One for tackling cybercrimes, the second is Cyber Security for training, outreach and capacity building, the third is the Information Disorder Tackling Unit (IDTU) enabled by AI, and the fourth for tackling Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or anti-CSAM," sources said.

The establishment of K4C is pursuant to directions from the Ministry of Home Affairs and orders of the Supreme Court to set up state Cyber Crime Coordination Centres (S4C) on the lines of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

▸ Cybercrime, Page 6

IISC STUDY

Bacteria from B'luru may help build bricks in Mars

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

What's common between Indian astronomer Shubhanshu Shukla, a soil bacterium isolated from Bengaluru, gums released by Guars (cluster beans) and Mars?

Well, they all are connected to an Indian Institute of Science (IISc) research that aims to perfect a technology for making bricks on the surface of the Red Planet using the Martian soil and use the same technology to make less carbon intensive bricks on Earth.

Construction of civil structures that need bricks on Mars appears to be science fiction for now. "But some day it may happen as there is a growing trend of sending people to space," IISc scientist Aloke Kumar, who is spearheading the research, told *DH*.

Shubhanshu Shukla and Swati Dubey

Kumar and his colleagues at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, including Shubhanshu Shukla, who is pursuing his Master's, are working on a process known as bio-cementation to build what they call space bricks out of lunar and Martian soil simulants using a soil microbe named Sporosarcina pasteurii, guar gums — a powdery material extracted from cluster beans — and a few chemicals.

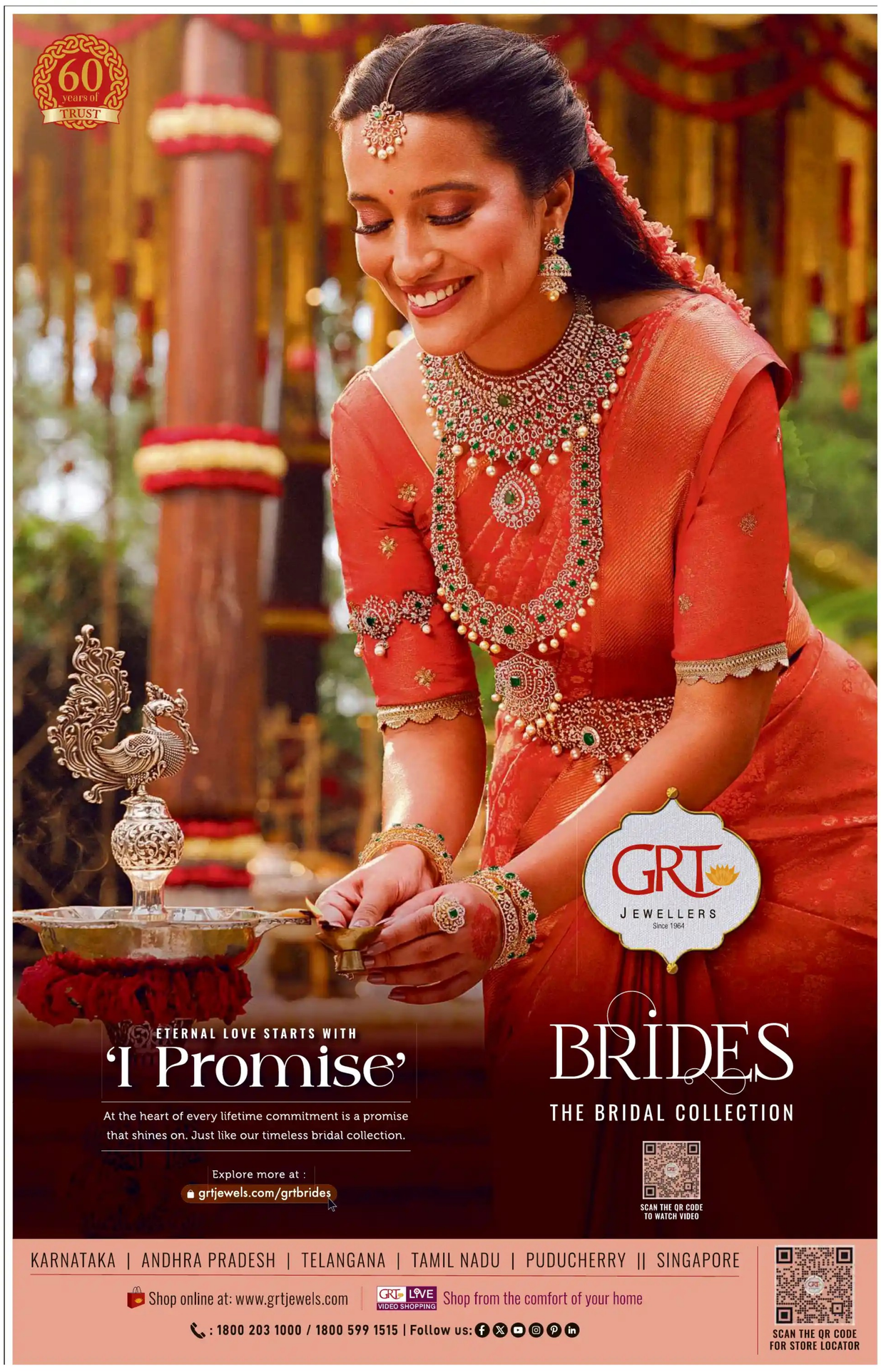
The bacterium converts urea and calcium into calcium carbonate crystals that, along with guar gum, glue the soil particles together to create brick-like materials.

This process is an eco-friendly and low-cost alternative to the lowering of cement, which is used in construction.

"The idea is to do in situ resource utilisation as much as possible. We don't have to carry anything from here. We can use those resources and make structures, which will make it a lot easier to navigate and do sustained missions over a period of time," said Shukla, the first Indian to enter the International Space Station (ISS).

During the recent study, the authors used a more robust, native strain of the bacterium that they discovered in Bengaluru.

▸ Bacteria, Page 6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WATER WISDOM

Meeting city's industrial water DEMAND

A view of a tech park near Bellandur, Outer Ring Road, in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

SHREE D N
BENGALURU, DHNS

Advanced greywater treatment with a public-private partnership is helping industries with water while reducing freshwater dependence

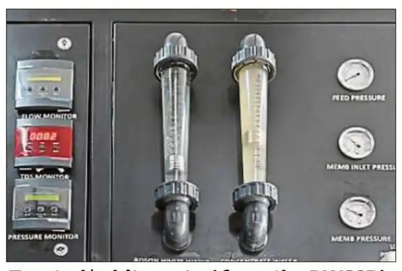
Bengaluru is expanding rapidly, with water demand increasing. Industrial demand is also increasing rapidly as more data centres are being built in the city, which require high-quality water for cooling. The city cannot pump more water from the Cauvery, and the government is considering drawing water from other rivers.

However, the city has a lifeline: the greywater. In addition to the 34 sewage treatment plants (STPs) operated by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bengaluru has over 3,500 decentralised apartment STPs. However, apartments typically reuse only 20–30% of treated water for flushing and gardening. The remaining water is often illegally discharged into drains because transporting it elsewhere is costly.

This is where private players like Boson White Water come into the picture. Vikas Brahmavar, the director of Trans Water System Private Limited (Boson White Water), who was recognised as a *DH* Changemaker in 2024, says the company focuses on large-scale reuse of treated wastewater by upgrading STP-treated water to very high industrial-grade quality.

Bozon installs its proprietary 11-stage treatment system within apartment complexes at its own cost after the formalities are completed. The system further treats STP water to "White Water" quality (TDS <70 ppm, hardness <20 ppm; meeting the highest industrial standards). The apartments incur no financial burden, comply with legal requirements, and Boson collects the water and sells it to nearby industries within a 4–5 km radius using leased tankers.

Currently, Bozon supplies about 12.36 lakh litres per day from apartment STPs. Over the past four years, the company has recycled over 111 crore litres of wastewater.



Treated 'white water' from the BWSSB's Kodibeesanahalli STP is of potable quality. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

"To scale this model citywide, we partnered with BWSSB using a Rs 50 lakh grant from Titan. A pilot project at the Kadubeesanahalli STP (50 MLD) treats 70,000 litres per day of BWSSB's treated water into high-quality reuse water, which is supplied to IT parks along the Outer Ring Road for cooling tower applications, in a data centre," he explains.

Using White Water in cooling towers significantly reduces blowdown frequency, cuts chemical wastage, improves efficiency, and lowers freshwater demand—making it ideal for IT parks, data centres, and industrial cooling, explains Brahmavar.

The treatment system is patent-designed, uses advanced filtration materials, and is fully IoT-monitored for real-time quality and quantity tracking. While the water is technically potable, it is currently used for non-potable industrial purposes due to psychological and cultural barriers to acceptance, says Brahmavar.

Where is BWSSB's treated water going?

A BWSSB official told *DH* that BWSSB is already supplying tertiary-treated water for non-potable use to several major consumers, including Bengaluru International Airport, Rail Wheel Factory, BEL, Indian Air Force, Arvind Mills, and Global Village. This water is sourced primarily from the Yelahanka STP and other BWSSB treatment plants and is intended for non-drinking uses.

In addition, small treatment plants operate within Cubbon Park (4 MLD) and Lalbagh (1.5 MLD), supplying water exclusively for horticulture and park maintenance. Treated water is also supplied to several prestigious locations, such as the Governor's House, Vidhana Soudha, M S Building, Bangalore Golf Course, Race Course, Indira Gandhi Musical Fountain, and Kanteerava Cricket Stadium.

Bengaluru—especially East, West, and parts of South Bengaluru—faces acute summer water stress, despite improved sewerage coverage. To address this, the official says that BWSSB is expanding reuse infrastructure and working to reduce dependence on groundwater.

"BWSSB is encouraging more startups and private firms working in the water space, some using advanced technologies like nanofiltration, to enter the water reuse space to help meet the demand for clean water," the official said.

Incidentally, BWSSB's STPs have been recognised nationally: 23 STPs received a 5-star rating under the Jal Jeevan Mission / AMRUT scheme, followed by Rs 103.7 crore in incentives. Using this fund, BWSSB is setting up 2.5 MLD decentralised treatment units in South and East Bengaluru to increase local availability and reduce logistics and transport costs, the official said.

What is the water demand?

Demand for treated water—especially from IT parks along the Outer Ring Road—is strong, but exact demand projections are difficult to make, as many users still rely on groundwater, said the BWSSB official.

In the Bengaluru Urban Water Balance Report by WELL Labs, researchers estimated industrial water use at approximately 240 million litres per day (MLD) in 2015, based on sectoral water accounting. This figure serves as a baseline against which later demand growth can be compared.

The same study projected that, if sectoral shares remained constant as the city grew, industrial demand could reach approximately 441 MLD by 2021, indicating a near doubling of industrial water requirements over about six years as population and economic activity expanded.

Various estimates indicate that the industrial sector continues to account for roughly 17% of overall water demand. A projection based on BWSSB planning indicates total city water requirement could rise to 2,900 MLD by 2031, driven by population growth and higher per capita use. Using the same sector share assumption, industrial demand by 2031 would be around 493 MLD.

This is only an estimation, not the actual projected demand. The BWSSB is encouraging industries and IT parks to use treated water for non-potable uses, which account for 85-90% of total water demand. The official says adoption is increasing, citing examples such as Wipro's use of zero-bacteria-treated water from Agaram Lake.

A major challenge to the use of treated water is public perception and trust in its quality, according to Brahmavar and the official. People are uncomfortable due to past experiences, staining, high TDS, and inconsistent quality. In residential apartments, zero-liquid-discharge systems are unpopular because treated water can cause staining and affect aesthetics, reducing flat sales. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) is perceived as weak in monitoring private STPs for water quality, but officials refrain from commenting on this.

The official says that policy-level solutions are being discussed, including mandatory dual plumbing systems and better quality standards. Another proposal under consideration is allowing well-maintained apartment STPs to discharge excess treated water into nearby lakes, especially during summer, to support lake rejuvenation—though this has not yet been implemented.

<<BOX>> Small industries unhappy

S S Hussain, General Secretary of Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA), says that small-scale industries have a big problem when it comes to BWSSB's water prices. "There is no regulatory authority for water prices. It is managed completely by the board. Whatever subsidies they provide to residential consumers, they collect from industries. We are charged Rs 110 for 1000 litres of water, which is very expensive," he adds.

For household consumption, they have various slabs starting from Rs 7 to Rs 8 per 1000 litres, while industries are charged Rs 110 from the first 1000 litres," he explains.

He says there is no issue with water availability, but only with pricing. However, he says BWSSB has not been able to persuade small industries, particularly in small clusters, to use treated water.

"I have checked the quality of treated water in the past and am not convinced that it is clean enough to use. BWSSB keeps saying that they will make industries use treated water, but not enough confidence-building measures have been taken up," he adds.

Separate pipelines for supplying treated water were planned for the Peenya Industrial area, but have not yet been laid, and no one has any idea of the plans, he says. He is also unaware of private, high-quality treated water suppliers.

BWSSB projected water demand and shortfall

Year	Population (Million)	Water demand (MLD)	Water demand (TMC)	Present supply (MLD)	Present supply (TMC)	Shortfall in demand (MLD)	Shortfall in demand (TMC)
2011	8.499	1,400	18.05	950	12.25	450	5.8
2019	**12.9**	**2,090**	**26.97**	**1,450**	**19**	**640**	**8.25**
2021	13	2,150	27.7	1,450	19	700	9.03
2024	**13.2**	**2,200**	**28.4**	**2,335**	**30.1**	**-135**	**-1.75**
2031	14.296	2,900	37.39	2,335	30.1	565	7.3
2041	**17.085**	**3,400**	**43.84**	**2,335**	**30.1**	**1065**	**13.75**
2051	20.561	4,100	52.86	2,335	30.1	1765	22.75

Feedback:
pointblank@deccanherald.co.in

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

GeM NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Southern Railway, Madurai- 625016 for and on behalf of The President of India invites Online tenders in **Two packet system** from the reputed contractors for the following work as per tender notice given in Government e-Marketing place (GeM) portal. The tenderer(s)/Contractor(s) to apply for works in Madurai Division, need to get enrolled **in the GeM portal and only online tenders will be accepted**.

Sl. No	Name of the work	On Board Housekeeping Services (OBHS) in Trains (including special trains) maintained at Tirunelveli (TEN) coaching depot of Madurai Division for the period of Two Years.			
	GeM Bid No	Place of work	Value of the work	EMD	Tender closing date
1	GEM/2026/B/7161449 Dt: 28.01.2026	Tirunelveli	₹ 4,07,03,450 (Including GST @ 18%)	₹ 3,53,520	11.00 Hrs on 19.02.2026

Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderers to check any Corrigendum is issued for any correction; deletion or modifications uploaded subsequently in the website and the same shall be taken into account while uploading the tender. For further details please visit website at **"http://www.gem.gov.in".**

Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer,
Southern Railway, Madurai

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Salem Division

Office of the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, Electric Loco Shed, Erode

E-Tender Notice

Online tender is invited for the following work:

Tender No	Description of Work
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_25_26_18, Dated: 28-01-2026	Works contract for painting and changing Lookout glass & beading, side oval glass & beading of electric locomotives available at electric loco shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode.
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_25_26_19, Dated: 28-01-2026	Works contract for Dismantling, Cleaning and minor attentions of Traction Motors of electric locomotives available at Electric Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode.
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_25_26_20, Dated: 28-01-2026	Works contract for dismantling and cleaning of Bogie frame assembly and mechanical components of electric locomotives available at Electric Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_25_26_21, Dated: 28-01-2026	Works contract for Calibration of Measuring Instruments available at Electric Loco Shed, Salem Division, Southern Railway, Erode.

All details regarding the tender are available at **https://www.ireps.gov.in**

DEE/RS/ED
For Sr. DEE/RS/ED

S.E. RAILWAY – E-TENDER

Tender Notice No.: PCMM/GENL/TP/2026/04 **Dated : 30.01.2026**

TENDER FOR "E" PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

The Principal Chief Materials Manager, South Eastern Railway, Hd. Qrs. Office (5th Floor), New Administrative Building, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-tenders which have been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** as follows. All the tenders will be closed at 14.00 hrs.

Sl No.	Tender No.	Closing Date	Brief Description	Quantity	EMD (in Rs.)
1.	65255002C	12.02.26	HABD (Hot Axle Box Detector) system.	09 Nos.	1,03,500/-
2.	25251302A	11.02.26	Commutator Assembly etc.	42 Nos.	3,30,070/-
3.	33253288A	10.02.26	Secondary Lateral Damper for FIAT Bogie etc.	2570 Nos.	3,16,600/-
4.	33255030	09.03.26	Supply, installation, testing etc.	04 Set	6,25,400/-
5.	33261513	02.03.26	Bogie Frame Assembly for Coil Spring LHB etc.	23 Nos.	1,38,940/-
6.	81251804	12.02.26	Liquified Petroleum Gas for industrial application etc.	138544 Kgs.	2,68,690/-
7.	IF255242	23.02.26	Modified Elastomeric Pad.	3750 Nos.	1,55,850/-
8.	IG265124	26.02.26	Un-insulated Cadmium Copper Catenary wire 65 sq. mm.	5.42 MT.	1,19,850/-
9.	33251471	18.03.26	Top Flange for LHB coaches etc.	1380 Nos.	1,75,870/-
10.	33255031	13.03.26	Air Spring failure indication etc.	170 Set	3,17,630/-
11.	GEM/2026/B/7110884	05.02.26	Healthcare Kitchen & Dietary Service etc.	02 years	7,81,096/-
12.	GEM/2026/B/7117427	06.02.26	Biomedical Waste Management Service etc.	02 years	1,08,391/-

Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders & any Corrigendum published thereafter.

(PR-1123)

A-12039/01/2025-Estt.III
Government of India
Ministry of Science & Technology
Department of Science & Technology

ADVT. No. DST/01/2026-Estt.III

Applications are invited for filling up the 01 (One) post of Estate Officer (in Pay Level-8 of the 7th CPC) in the Department of Science & Technology on Deputation (including short-term) contract (ISTC) basic. Eligible and willing candidates are required to first fill an **online** application on the online portal **https://recruitment.dst.gov.in/** using a valid email ID. This online portal for applying shall be available for a period of **45 days** from the date of publication of the advertisement in Employment News / Rozgar Samachar. Thereafter, hard copy of the successfully submitted online application form, duly signed by the candidate along with attested copies of ACRs/APARs for the last five years duly attested on each page by an officer not below the rank of Under Secretary to the Govt. of India or an officer of equivalent rank and also a summary sheet of the ACR/APAR gradings received in these o5 years are to mandatorily forwarded through proper channel so as to reach this Department by **Registered Post or by Speed Post** within 30 days (45 days for applicants from remote areas i.e. those in Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Ladakh, Lahaul and Spiti District and Pangi Sub Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep) **from the date of closure of the online portal.** Applicants (otherwise eligible to apply) working in Organisations / Institutes that do no have the system of recording APARs/ACRs need to furnish their work profiles and gradings of the last 05 years duly certified by their Head of Organisation/Institute along with their applications through proper channel so as to reach this Department by **Registered Post or by Speed Post** within 30 days (45 days for remote areas) **from the date of closure of online portal.** For the application process and other general conditions and requirements, refer the detailed advertisement available on the Recruitment Cell webpage under the Administration & Finance section of our website (www.dst.gov.in).

Sd/- **(Lily Pal)**
Under Secretary to the Government of India

CBC 36101-11-0013-2526

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

SALEM DIVISION (SIGNAL & TELECOM BRANCH)
E-Tender Notice No. SA-SG-120-I-OT-22-2025, SA-SG-120-I-OT-23-2025, SA-SG-120-I-OT-25-2025 date. 27.01.2026 & SA-SG-120-I-OT-20-2025 Dt.28.01.2026.

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Southern Railway/ Salem Division, Salem - 636005 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tenderer(s)/contractor(s) intending to apply for e-tender for WORKS in Salem Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted. Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) & Tender Document Cost (TDC), in respect of e-tendering, should be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. **Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR) will not be accepted as EMD for tenders invited on IREPS (e-tender portal).**

Sl. No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of work
1	SA-SG-120-I-OT-22-2025	SALEM DIVISION: Zonal Contract for S&T works over Salem Division (ADSTE/SA section) for period of two years. **Appx. Cost of the work** : ₹ 34,99,595.38. **Earnest Money Deposit** : ₹ 70,000/- **Eligibility criteria for similar single work previously executed :** Not Applicable. **Period of completion in months** : 24 months.
2	SA-SG-120-I-OT-23-2025	SALEM DIVISION: Zonal Contract for S&T works over Salem Division (ADSTE/ED section) for period of two years. **Appx. Cost of the work** : ₹ 34,99,595.38. **Earnest Money Deposit** : ₹ 70,000/- **Eligibility criteria for similar single work previously executed :** Not Applicable. **Period of completion in months** : 24 months.
3	SA-SG-120-I-OT-25-2025	SALEM DIVISION: Zonal Contract for S&T works over Salem Division (ADSTE/KRR section) for period of two years. **Appx. Cost of the work** : ₹ 34,99,595.38. **Earnest Money Deposit** : ₹ 70,000/- **Eligibility criteria for similar single work previously executed :** Not Applicable. **Period of completion in months** : 24 months.
4	SA-SG-120-I-OT-20-2025	SALEM DIVISION: Provision of Electronic Coach Indication Boards at CBE, SA, KRR, SXT, ATU, PGR, KLT, RASP, MMH, MONR & KMD stations. **Appx. Cost of the work** : ₹ 3,72,07,327.83/- **Earnest Money Deposit** : ₹ 3,36,000. **Eligibility criteria for similar single work previously executed** : Applicable. **Period of completion in months** : 12 months.
Cost of Tender Form Including Tax ₹		Nil for All works
Sl.No.		Tender closing date and time :
1,2,3 & 4		19/02/2026 & 20.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.
NOTE:		1) For Sl.No.1,2 & 3 Tender Closing date at 15.00hrs 19.02.2026 2) For Sl.No.4 Tender Closing date 20.02.2026 at 15.00hrs

Details of approximate value of tender, tender form cost, EMD & location are given on the e-portal, **www.ireps.gov.in**.

For other details, terms and conditions, the tenderers are advised to refer to the tender documents which are available at **www.ireps.gov.in** website.

SENIOR DIVISIONAL SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION ENGINEER / SALEM - 636 005.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our client Mr. B. K. Raghavendra (Major), S/o B.C. Kempaiah who had the custody of the following original documents pertaining to the **land bearing Survey No. 28, situated at Kylasanahalli Village. K.R. Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk** has lost the same in transit. Our client has also lodged a Police Complaint dated 12.01.2026 vide complaint No.2004265/2026 notifying loss of documents.

Any person who finds it, is requested to return the same to the undersigned having their office at the below-mentioned address.

DETAILS OF THE LOST DOCUMENTS

1. Sale Deed dated 20.03.1918, executed by Oballappa S/o. Srinivasaiah and others in favor of Muni Venkatappa S/o. Matada Venkatappa registered as Document No. 3738/1917-18.
2. Mortgage Deed executed by Muni Venkatappa, S/o.Matada Venkatappa in favour of Muneppa, S/o. Nanjundappa dated 23.07.1918 registered as Document No. 1600/1918-19, in Book I, Volume 359 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore Urban.
3. Copy of Plaint and Final Decree passed in suit bearing O.S. No. 211/1933-34.
4. Copy of Appeal in Appeal No. 23/1936-37 filed before the Court of Additional Subordinate Judge, Bangalore.
5. Sale Deed dated 05.03.1951, executed by Munishamappa and Venkatappa alias Thayappa in favor of Chikkabodappa alias Hanumanthaiah registered as Document No. 5051/1951-52, Book-I, Vol. 1245 at Pages 10 to 15 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapuram.
6. Sale Deed dated 05.03.1951, executed by Munishamappa and Venkatappa alias Thayappa in favor of Chikkabodappa alias Hanumanthaiah registered as Document No. 7123/1951-52, Book-I, Volume. 125, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapuram.
7. Partition Deed dated 12.05.1972, executed amongst Chikkabodappa and others registered as Document No. 833/1972-73, Book I, Volume 1327 at Pages 202 to 210, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Krishnarajapuram.
8. Order dated 01.12.2010, passed in case bearing R.R.T.C.R/46/10-11 before the office of the Special Tahsildar, Bangalore East Taluk.
9. Order dated 29.01.2011 in case bearing No. RRT (BE):CR:309/10-11 before the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore East Taluk.

Dated: 30.01.2026

S. T. Prashantha Kumar, Advocate & Senior Partner
Naga Champa B. N., Advocate & Associate Partner
Fox Mandal & Associates
"FM House", 6/12, Primrose Road, Bangalore 560 025
Phone : +91 80 2559 5911. e-mail: bangalore@foxmandal.in

Government of India
Ministry of Communications
Department of Telecommunications
Telecommunication Engineering Centre
K.L. Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi-110001

No.1-13/2023-Pers./TEC-Part(1)/04

Notice for engagement of Research Associate in TEC

Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), Department of Telecommunications, New Delhi invites applications from eligible candidates for engagement as Research Associate for an initial period of one year which can be extended by another one year. DoT website (www.dot.gov.in) or TEC website (www.tec.gov.in) may be visited for detailed information and subsequent corrigenda, if any.

The duly filled application may be sent by post or submitted personally to ADG(Pers.), TEC, K.L. Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001. Last date for receipt of application is **02.02.2026.**

CBC 06235-11-0007-2526

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

PALAKKAD DIVISION

Sr. Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination / Southern Railway / Palakkad invites E-TENDERS for the following works.

E-TENDER NOTICE No. PGT/OT/01/2026 dated 28/01/2026

Sl. No	Name of work
1.	Shoranur-Mangalore section: Proposed construction of additional under pass (1 x 6.00 x 3.80 m RCC box) adjacent to exg. Br.no.1131 (RUB) at km 775/100-200 between Payangadi and Kannapuram station (deposit work of state govt- Kallayassery gramapanchayat). **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs :** 316.20 **Bid Security amount :** ₹ 3,08,100/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs** : 27/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months :** Twelve
2.	Divisional Engineer/East/Palakkad section: Left over works in connection with : CTR (P) 23.293 Km (between PTJ-SRR, SRR-CLT) such as provision for ballasted track for a total length of 0.800 Km duly demolishing existing damaged CC apron at Rd No.4 of PGT yard (Km 533.800-534.600 (on B line)) and RCC side drain for a length of 800 mtrs. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs** : 120.79 **Bid Security amount :** ₹ 2,10,400/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs :** 19/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months :** Six
3	Shoranur Junction - Construction of staff quarters in lieu of condemned and dismantled quarters Type II - 12 units & Type III - 4 units at Shoranur. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs** : 396.04 **Bid Security amount** : ₹ 3,48,000/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs** : 27/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months :** Ten
4.	Mangalore Junction - Improvements to the freight maintenance infrastructural facilities at Mangalore Junction. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs** : 24.18 **Bid Security amount :** ₹ 48,400/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs:** 19/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months** : Nine
5.	Palakkad Division - Sr. Divisional Engineer/West/Palakkad Jurisdiction - Proposed renewal SEJ to TWSEJ and Glue Joints. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs** : 157.10 **Bid Security amount :** ₹ 2,28,600/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs :** 27/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months :** Twelve
6.	Palakkad Division - Renewal of Glued Joints, SEJs and Elimination of Fish plated joints in yards across division. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs:** 233.48 **Bid Security amount** : ₹ 2,66,700/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs** : 27/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months :** Twelve
7.	Palakkad Division - Sr. Divisional Engineer/West/Palakkad - Supply, Installation and maintenance of auto chlorination plants at various stations of Senior Section Engineer/Works/Calicut, Senior Section Engineer/Works/ Kannur and Senior Section Engineer/Works/Mangalore sections for a period of 2 Years. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs :** 22.59 **Bid Security amount** : ₹ 45,200/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs** : 19/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months** : Six
8.	(1) Metallizing and transportation of RDSO standard RH girders from EWS/ AJJ to various locations in Palakkad division & supply and fixing of Galvanized H beam sleepers & fittings (2) Construction of shed for storage of materials at Palakkad. **Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs :** 452.88 **Bid Security amount :** ₹ 3,76,500/- **Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs** : 27/02/2026 **Completion Period in Months** : Twelve

1. All the contracts on Works/goods/services will be subject to the new GST Act as applicable from time to time.
2. Contractors/Suppliers have to register themselves with GST authorities and to furnish the GST registration number in order to process the bills from 01.7.2017 onwards.
3. For complete details of the above tenders please visit Web site "**http://www.ireps.gov.in.**"

Note: It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to check any corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken in to account while submitting Tender.

Sr.Divisional Engineer/Co-ordination/
Southern Railway/Palakkad
For and on behalf of the President of India

One child dies every 9 minutes due to antibiotic resistance, warn experts

BENGALURU, DHNS: One child in India dies every nine minutes from an infection caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, said Dr HB Veena Kumari of the Department of Neuromicrobiology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).

She was speaking at the national symposium on 'Emerging and Re-emerging Infections with a Focus on Antimicrobial Resistance' at St Joseph's University here.

Speaking about the effects of antimicrobial resistance, Dr Veena said, "The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly contributed to rising antimicrobial resistance. The World Health Organisation projects that 10 million deaths will occur annually by 2025, if antimicrobial resistance is unaddressed."

It is one of the top 10 global public health threats, as recognised by WHO, said Dr Veena. The WHO report of 2025 states that between 2018 and 2023, antimicrobial resistance increased by over 40% of pathogen-antibiotic combinations, with an average annual increase of 5%.

Dr T S Balganesh, Gangagen Biotechnologies, pointed out that 12 to 36% of haemodialysis patients die from fatal infections, which is second only to cardiovascular diseases as a cause of death. "The risk for infective endocarditis in haemodialysis patients is approximately 18 times higher than in the general population and up to 58% of these episodes are caused by a bacteria named 'S aureus', with an in-hospital mortality of more than 50%," said Dr Balganesh.

The experts also pointed out that India alone accounts for the highest national antimicrobial resistance mortality globally. Hospital pathogens such as MRSA, CRE, ESBL-producing Enterobacteriaceae and MDR Acinetobacter dominate the resistance landscape.

Kumar Pushkar to be new chief wildlife warden

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kumar Pushkar, a 1994 Indian Forest Service officer, will take over as the chief wildlife warden of Karnataka starting February 1.

The state government on Friday issued a notification promoting Pushkar to the grade of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) with effect from February 1.

Pushkar will take over the post of PCCF (Wildlife) and chief wildlife warden from Prabhash Chandra Ray, who retires on January 31.

North corporation revenue office shifted to RT Nagar

BENGALURU, DHNS: The revenue office of the Bengaluru North City Corporation will begin functioning from a new location at Nrupathunga Layout, near the Indira Canteen on RT Nagar Main Road, from Monday, according to a press release.

The office was earlier located on Munireddypalya Main Road in JC Nagar.

3 weekly trains between B'luru & Bengal

BENGALURU, DHNS: The railways has begun operating three new weekly trains connecting Bengaluru to poll-bound West Bengal. The train services run with 22 coaches and have scheduled stoppages at KR Puram and Bangarapet in Karnataka. They are aimed at benefiting students, traders and tourists by providing a direct rail link between southern and eastern India, according to a press release from SWR.

NICE project: Plaint against Ashok Kheny over missing files

Activist alleges destruction of records to conceal irregularities

BENGALURU, DHNS

Abraham T J, social activist and president of the Anti-Graft/Corruption & Environmental Forum, has filed a complaint against Ashok Kheny, Managing Director of Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE), and others.

He alleges a "well-orchestrated conspiracy" to destroy official records related to the Bengaluru–Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project. The complaint, lodged with the Vidhana Soudha Police on Friday, names Kheny, NICE Director Shivkumar Kheny and former PWD Secretary Major CR Ramesh.

Abraham alleges that crucial documents previously acknowledged by the Special Lokayukta Court in 2012 have now been declared "not available" by the Public Works Department (PWD) in response to recent RTI queries.

The activist claims the "disappearance" of these records is a strategic move to suppress evidence of an illegal increase in land acquisition. The complaint states the land requirement was fraudulently hiked from 18,313 acres to 20,193 acres, allegedly resulting in an illicit gain of Rs 3,762 crore.

"The acts are a criminal conspiracy to erase incriminating records and screen the accused from punishment," Abraham stated. He has sought an FIR under the BNS

Govt to approach court against hike in toll charges: Minister

The state government is all set for a legal battle against the Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE) for increasing the toll charges without bringing it to its notice and getting prior approval.

In a written reply to the question by Congress MLC Ramoji Gowda in the Legislative Council, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Satish Jarkiholi said that the government is making preparations to approach the court against the NICE.

"The NICE company increased the toll charges in 2017, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Except for 2022, the company has not informed the government about the toll charges revision in the following years. Regarding this, we are taking necessary measures to file a case in the court," read the reply given by the minister.

According to the toll concession agreement, the government had verified the proposals submitted by NICE in 2008, 2010 and 2011 regarding toll charges revision and had issued notifications after verifying the proposals.

But, after 2011, the company revised the charges in 2017, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 without obtaining prior approval from the government, the minister said in his reply.

The minister has even mentioned that the government would take further measures regarding the Bangalore Mysore Infrastructure Corridor project once the cabinet subcommittee submits its report.

The subcommittee was formed on April 16, 2025. In July last year, the Public Works Department served a notice to NICE for increasing toll charges by 7.5% without obtaining the government's approval. The department had stated that the revised tariff violates the framework agreement signed in 1994 and made it clear that it would not recognise the "unauthorised" hike.

The notice even cited Article 6.4 of the framework agreement, which mandates that the company must seek the Karnataka government's approval before revising toll charges.

No tobacco ads on buses or bus stations: Minister to RTCs

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has directed state-run road transport corporations (RTCs) in Karnataka not to allow any advertisements of tobacco products on buses or bus stations.

In a letter to the managing directors of the state's four RTCs on Friday, Reddy stated: "In public interest, I hereby direct that no direct or indirect advertisements promoting the consumption of tobacco products shall henceforth be displayed in transport corporation buses or at bus stations."

He also directed that a specific time frame be fixed for the removal of such advertisements already installed on buses or at bus stations. The parties concerned shall be strictly instructed to remove them within the stipulated period, he added.

Paan masala ads

Reddy issued the directions following a controversy over paan masala advertisements on buses operated by the Hubballi-headquartered North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC).

Citizens had recently taken the matter into their own hands and removed the advertisements from Hubballi-Dharwad city buses. The NWKRTC had allowed the full-body wraps advertisements to increase its non-fare revenue.

Citizens had pointed out that though the ads do not contain the words 'tobacco' or 'gutkha', they indirectly promote tobacco products.

The NWKRTC had promised an inquiry into the incident, stating that the Advertisement Standards Code of India strictly prohibits advertisements concerning tobacco and alcoholic products.

Bike taxi: Transport associations tell govt to move SC

BENGALURU, DHNS: Private transport associations on Friday urged Karnataka to seek interim stay on the recent high court judgment permitting bike taxis and to file a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court.

The Federation of Karnataka State Private Transport Associations, a large body of licensed operators, insisted in a letter to the Commissioner for Transport and Road Safety that bike taxis pose a "grave danger" to public safety.

Karnataka had banned bike taxis on June 16, 2025, following a single-bench order, which was lifted by a division bench on January 23.

The judgment directed the state to register motorcycles as transport vehicles and grant them contract carriage permits.

Pointing out "infirmities" in the judgement, federation president H Nataraj Sharma said it raises substantial questions of law of general public importance, including the scope of statutory interpretation under the Motor Vehicles Act, the limits of judicial review over transport policy, the extent of executive regulatory power under Section 67, and the balance between business freedom and passenger safety.

These issues have nationwide ramifications and merit authoritative consideration by the Supreme Court, he added.

"If allowed to attain finality, the decision will not only disturb Karnataka's transport framework but may also create a binding precedent across the country, thereby affecting the regulatory authority of all states," he noted.

Roy identified the potential of city's peripheral corridors before tech boom

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

The rise of Roy Chiriankandath Joseph, popularly known as CJ Roy, closely reflects Bengaluru's own transformation, especially the real-estate landscape, into a global city.

Roy began his professional career in the 1990s, a period when multinational companies were just beginning to establish their presence in Bengaluru. About seven years after working with companies such as BPL, TVS Electronics and HP, he ventured into a real estate business.

Long before the IT boom transformed Bengaluru, Roy was among the early developers to identify the potential of the city's peripheral corridors, particularly the stretch between Bellandur and Sarjapura. "I came to real estate by choice and not by chance," Roy often said.

Central to his business philosophy was a commitment to a debt-free model. He believed in executing projects without bank loans, an approach that set him apart in an industry often dependent on borrowings. A native of Kochi, Roy credited his early understanding of real estate to his mother, who had an instinct for acquiring plots and building homes.

Under his leadership, Confident Group grew into a diversified conglomerate with business interests spanning India, the UAE and the United States. The group delivered several prominent real estate projects in Bengaluru and Kerala, as well as in Dubai.

Roy - who was active on social media - was also known for his philanthropic initiatives, particularly in supporting underprivileged students.

A builder close to Roy described real estate as a profession fraught with constant pressure. "While the business can be lucrative, it also exposes entrepreneurs to intense stress from multiple quarters such as political establishments, bureaucratic systems and local goons. His death recalls the tragic demise of V G Siddhartha," he told *DH*. Roy also forayed into the hospitality industry which flourished.

'Don't take shortcuts': Roy's words echo after tragic demise

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Following the death of Confident Group founder and chairman CJ Roy amid an Income Tax raid, an earlier interview in which the businessman spoke strongly about fair business practices has drawn renewed attention.

"We follow all rules. Don't take shortcuts. Go by the rules so that tomorrow you won't have to answer uncomfortable questions," Roy had said in an interview.

He was responding to reports linking the Confident Group to coastal regulation zone (CRZ) violations, after four flats were demolished in Kochi in 2020.

Roy had clarified that while the group had acquired land and begun taking bookings for an apartment project, the plan was abandoned at an early stage once the CRZ violation came to light.

All booking amounts, he said, were returned to customers with interest.

In Kerala, Roy was as well known as his firm, Confident Group, having been a familiar face through sponsorships of popular television programmes. Though he had roots in Thrissur and belonged to the Chiriyankandathu family, he spent little of his childhood there.

Former Union Minister KV Thomas, who shared a personal rapport with Roy, described him as emotional and grounded despite heading a business empire.

"He was a down-to-earth person who built his business through hardship. I often felt he was quite emotional. He was also passionate about cars," Thomas said, adding that Roy's Kerala manager hailed from Kumbalangi, near Kochi, through whom he often heard about him.

Roy was also a prominent figure in the Malayalam film industry, having produced four films, including Mohanlal-starrers *Casanovva* and *Marakkar*: *Arabikadalinte Simham*. His most recent production was *Anomie*, starring Bhavana and Rahman.

Known for his generosity, Roy often offered high-value prizes on television reality shows.

The Confident Group has a presence across Kerala, with around 20 projects currently at various stages of construction in the state.

CJ Roy: Christ School alumnus who built a real estate empire

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The shocking shooting incident involving CJ Roy, founder of the Confident Group, has brought renewed focus on a man whose life was marked by flamboyant success, persistent controversy and a constant effort to reclaim his public image.

Though Roy's business interests spanned continents, his early roots lay firmly in Karnataka.

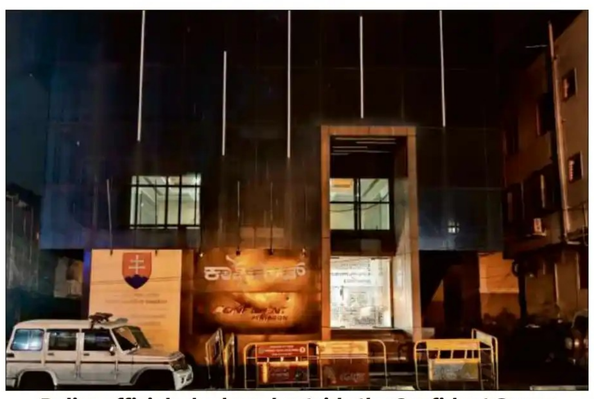
An alumnus of Christ School in Bengaluru, he later moved to Tumakuru to pursue an engineering degree.

Those familiar with his formative years recall a man driven by ambition, who began his professional journey as a salesman with a small electronics firm dealing in computers.

Roy's entry into large-scale real estate came through the Crystal Group, where he worked closely with Latha Namboothiri, rising from manager to director.

However, the launch of the Confident Group in 2005 was accompanied by industry speculation.

Insiders speak of a fallout involving alleged "benami" properties and claims of deception that paved the way for his independent venture — a narrative Roy spent years attempting to distance himself from, a close associate told *DH*.



Police officials deployed outside the Confident Group building in Langford Town, barricaded to prevent unauthorised entry. DH PHOTO/PRAJWAL D'SOUZA

Heavy police presence in Langford Town

Police personnel from the Central division were deployed outside the Confident Group building in Langford Town. The building also houses the Slovak Honorary Consulate in Bengaluru. The otherwise busy premises, located close to Hosur Road, wore a deserted look on Friday in the aftermath of the tragedy.

A tale of two cities

Roy's business career unfolded very differently across geographies.

In Dubai, he earned a reputation as a visionary developer, completing massive luxury residential projects in record time — some in as little as 11 months.

His lavish lifestyle in the Emirates and ability to deliver projects swiftly stood in sharp contrast to his standing in Bengaluru.

Back home, Roy's image was more fractured.

Sources say he largely stayed away from Bengaluru for years following disputes over unpaid dues to vendors and suppliers.

"There was a time when he could not even enter the city," a person familiar with his dealings said. Several projects were reportedly stalled, and allegations of unfulfilled commitments to cement and steel suppliers followed him.

Roy's re-entry into Bengaluru's business and social circles began around 2018, marked by a deliberate effort at rebranding.

His appointment as Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic lent diplomatic legitimacy, which he leveraged alongside visible CSR initiatives, including ambulance donations and high-profile charity events.

NCB busts secret drug lab in Mysuru; four arrested

NEW DELHI, PTI

The Narcotics Control Bureau has busted a secret drug manufacturing laboratory in Karnataka's Mysuru and arrested four people from Rajasthan after seizing narcotics worth Rs 10 crore, the agency said on Friday.

This crackdown began on January 28 in Gujarat's Surat, where federal officials intercepted a SUV in the Palsana area. The vehicle was found carrying about 35 kg of Mephedrone.

Followingthe seizure, the Narcotcis Control Bureau (NCB) arrested the alleged mastermind of this trafficking racket named Mahindra Kumar Vishnoi and three others. All four suspects are residents of Rajasthan's Jalore district. The investigation led to officials to a "clandestine" drugs manufacturing laboratory located in Hebbal industrial area of Mysuru.

The laboratory was being operated under the guise of a chemical manufacturing unit for cleaning purposes. The facility had been rented by a co-accused and relative of Vishnoi, the NCB said in a statement.

"Drugs worth Rs 10 crore (market value), Rs 25.6 lakh in cash, an SUV and 500 kgs of chemicals used in the manufacturing of drugs have been seized during the operation," it said, adding that the lab is understood to be established in 2024.

According to the NCB, Vishnoi is a "habitual offender" who "conceived" the idea of manufacturing synthetic drugs in secret labs while he was incarcerated in a drugs trafficking case. He has three drug-related cases registered against him in Rajasthan and one in Gujarat, the NCB added.

It was only verification, says home minister

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara said that the NCB did not conduct a raid on a phenyl unit at Hebbal industrial area in Mysuru, but have only did verification as part of a follow up in a case, reports DHNS from Mysuru.

Speaking to media persons in Mysuru on Friday, the Home Minister said, "The NCB team did not find any drugs or raw materials used to manufacture drugs at the unit. They only found raw materials used to manufacture phenyl. It was a phenyl factory. It was not a raid, it was only a verification. It was just a follow up in case. The owner of the unit is a relative of an accused arrested in other state and the NCB, verified the spot out of suspicion. They informed our local police, who extended cooperation. Our police also go to other states in several follow up cases. So such mutual cooperation is imperative".

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Thomas Cook
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8D - Europe for All (France, Belgium Germany, Switzerland)
Starting @ ₹1 91 000.00
7D - East Europe (Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Bratislava)
Starting @ ₹1 91 000.00
India And Around Holidays
7D - Bhutan Fly Direct from Bangalore
Starting @ ₹75 990.00
10D - Kailash Mansarovar Ex-Lucknow
Starting @ ₹2 87 000.00
*T & C Apply
Inclusions: Flights, Hotels, Meals, Visa Fees, Insurance, Sightseeing & Services of our Experience Manager.
Meet our holiday experts on Saturday & Sunday | Time: 10am to 7pm
31st Jan
01st Feb
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway
ibis Bengaluru City Centre
opposite Mallya Hospital
8652908456

You'll never be a bigger ST leader than Sriramulu, Reddy taunts Nagendra

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Ballari violence once again echoed in the state Assembly on Friday after former minister and Congress MLA B Nagendra accused Gangavathi MLA G Janardhana Reddy of "misleading" the House with "incorrect" statements attributed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Referring to Reddy's statements made during the debate on the Governor's address the previous day, Nagendra contended that the CM never said putting up banners was wrong.

Clarifying remarks attributed to Shivakumar on security cover, Nagendra said, "The deputy chief minister only stated that Z-category security can be granted only by the Centre. He never made the comments being circulated."

'Protection issue'

Reddy had alleged that Shivakumar had suggested that he should seek protection in Iran or the US or deploy BJP party workers for his protection.

Responding to Reddy's charge that Ballari had turned into a "republic," Nagendra rejected the allegation and said repeated claims were being made "to turn a lie into truth."

Reddy countered Nagendra's statement that ST leader B Sriramulu had threatened to "track down Bharat Reddy once the BJP came to power by saying, "Sriramulu never said that. He only said that the Congress government had arrested only the private gunman and not MLA Bharat Reddy following the Congress worker's death in the firing. Sriramulu had said Bharat Reddy would be arrested and brought to justice when BJP comes to power."

"Congress has stolen Valmiki corporation funds and how much ever you (Nagendra) try, you will never be a taller ST leader than Sriramulu even after many lives," Reddy taunted.

Governor's address a 'colonial hangover', says Suresh Kumar

Calls for national debate on its relevance, asks Karnataka govt to take the lead

BENGALURU, DHNS

Senior BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar on Friday urged the state government to initiate a national debate on the relevance of the Governor's joint address to the legislature, describing the practice as a "colonial hangover" that had lost its significance and sanctity.

Participating in the discussion on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address in the Assembly, Kumar said the exercise had been reduced to an annual ritual with little substantive value.

He observed that the Governor's speech was meant to present the government's achievements of the previous year and outline future programmes, but had increasingly acquired political overtones.

Recalling his legislative career, Kumar said, "Since I entered this House in 1994, Karnataka has had nearly 18 governors. Some, like Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar and Dharma Vira, are remembered with respect, while a few others are remembered for the wrong reasons. I myself have seen seven Governors function during my tenure."

"Since we adopted Westminster model of the United Kingdom, where the Queen addresses the two Houses and greets members as part of the tradition, the Governor's address was included under Article 87. But when the Constitution was drafted, they had not envisioned such a situation (government-governor conflicts) just like we had not anticipated cyber crimes when IPC was drafted," stated Kumar.

Calling for a relook at the Governor's address, while clarifying it was his personal view and not his party's stand, Kumar said, "Karnataka should take the lead in examining whether the address remained relevant in the present context."

He referred to past suggestions by jurist late Justice M Rama Jois, and now Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin who wants to move a constitutional amendment.

Kumar also demanded to know the fate of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) report on the Dharmasthala (mass burial case).

"Despite the High Court directions to continue the probe, the accused are roaming freely and speaking through social media. How long should Dharmasthala continue to carry a taint because of government inaction?," asked Kumar, who also flagged concerns over children's exposure to social media and called for regulation like in Australia.

BJP lawmaker S Suresh Kumar speaks during the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address in the Legislative Assembly, in Bengaluru on Friday.

Political discourse shifted from UPA scams to NDA's development: Vijayendra

Shikaripura MLA and Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra dared the Congress government to "show" one instance of corruption in the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

He said the Congress spoke only about the cut in central grants but failed to acknowledge the development being fast-tracked by the NDA government.

"Congress speaks as if no development is happening. Earlier debates were on 2G, coal and CWG scams; now the discussion is on development and ease of doing business." He challenged the Opposition, saying, "I dare Congress to mention one instance of corruption in Viksit Bharat."

On GST and Central spending, he said, "Why are you not discussing how GST collections are being invested in basic infrastructure, national security and job creation? The NDA motto is Nation First."

"Defence budget was Rs 2.53 lakh crore in 2014; today it is Rs 6.22 lakh crore - aircraft, submarines, drones are being procured," he said.

"India now has the world's second-largest highway network," he added, also pointing to "two lakh startups, over 100 unicorns and 16.6 lakh jobs created, all due to Centre's policies."

Referring to welfare schemes, he said, "Rural tap water coverage was 17% earlier; today it is 74%. Twelve crore toilets have been built."

"Fifteen states were once infested... Today they are more peaceful. That is how tax money is being spent," he added.

Citing the Congress' electoral decline, he said, "In 1961, Congress had 364 MPs, in 1984 it had 415 MPs. Today it is content with 99 seats. The party must introspect why it has reached this situation."

Govt launches 'Justice for Karnataka - Fair Share, Strong Federalism' campaign

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said the government has placed its "legitimate and constitutionally grounded" demands before the 16th Finance Commission seeking justice in tax devolution and fiscal federalism, and expressed hope that the Union government would implement the commission's recommendations without discrimination.

In a note to the media, Siddaramaiah said Karnataka, despite being among the highest contributors to national revenues, had seen its share in central tax devolution reduced from 4.71 per cent to 3.64 per cent earlier, resulting in an estimated loss of nearly Rs 80,000 crore.

Flawed formulas penalising development and population control, unrealistic GSDP calculations, inadequate disaster relief, unchecked cesses and surcharges, denial of GST compensation and non-release of recommended grants have weakened the state's finances, he alleged.

Siddaramaiah said the government has launched the 'Justice for Karnataka - Fair Share, Strong Federalism' campaign and released nine posters highlighting key demands, including the restoration of the tax share, which was reduced from 4.71% to 3.64%.

The state's other demands include a reduction in income distance weightage from 45% to 25%, restoration of the use of 1971 population data in tax sharing, and correction of the unrealistic GSDP base-year methodology, as IT exports inflate the state's GSDP and distort fair comparisons.

The government mooted the adoption of a Panchayat devolution index in fund allocation for effective governance in local governments.

Besides, a special package of Rs 10,000 crore for the backward Kalyana Karnataka region, special grants for ecology, farmers and irrigation projects, and an increase in the state's share of taxes to 50% and a cap on cess at 5% are part of the demands.

Ready to quit politics if allegations proved, says Timmapur

Targeted for being a Dalit: Minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

Excise Minister R B Timmapur defended himself in the Legislative Council on Friday and announced of retiring from politics if the allegations levelled against him are proved.

Replying to the corruption allegations levelled against him, Timmapur said that he had been targeted as he is a Dalit. "Opposition is conspiring against me, and if they provide proof, I will resign immediately, " he said.

Quoting examples of allegations levelled against previous excise ministers including those during BJP and JD(S) tenure, Timmapur said, "All the excise ministers in the past, including Renukacharya, Gopalaiah, Satish Jarkiholi, Manohar Tahsildar have faced similar allegations."

Timmapur attributed the allegations to his efforts for bringing out reforms in the system.

"I have introduced counselling in transfers. I made renewal of licence once every five years to check corruption," he said.

The minister mentioned about the bribe demanded by an official and held red handed by Lokayukta police.

"I got information about that particular officer and yes it was true that one by name Jagdeesh Nayak demanded a bribe. He has even misused my name. Just because he misused my name, should I resign?"

"The BJP government issued 1,404 licenses during Covid-19. How much was collected then? The Opposition is basing its attack on the allegations made by (Wine Merchants Association president) Guruswamy. He should reveal how much bribe is paid and to whom."

Timmapur informed the House that the Federation of Wine Merchants Association does not exist. "The Association has not renewed its registration and it does not exist," he said.

Pen drive evidence

Flashing a blue pen drive in his hands, the Minister said: "There is evidence of corruption allegations of (former) ministers in this. I can name them."

Interrupting him, the BJP members urged him to reveal names and the minister refused to do so.

However, unhappy with the reply, the Leader of Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy said that there were enough digital evidences.

"There is a monthly card for collecting bribe. You should resign and submit yourself to an investigation."

Soon, a high decibel heated verbal duel commenced between Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge and BJP member N Ravikumar after the former intervened when the latter was speaking.

While the BJP members entered the well demanding Thimmapur's resignation, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil intervened to say that it was not proper to consider the Lokayukta complaint as an evidence since his application for licence came for a facility in residential area that was not permissible. "Opposition, instead, should compliment the Minister for introducing counselling in transfers."

BJP lost power in state for failing to follow Modi model, says Yatnal

BENGALURU, DHNS

Expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Friday mocked the Karnataka BJP on the floor of the Assembly, attributing the party's poor tally of 66 seats to its failure to emulate the 'Modi model'.

Yatnal claimed that Siddaramaiah would not have become the Chief Minister for 20 years had the state unit of the BJP walked along the path shown by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

During the discussion on the Governor's address, Yatnal said the first session of the year should set the agenda, besides deciding the direction of policy for governance, while calling on the state to adopt a non-confrontational approach in its engagement with the Centre.

Political rivalry must be kept out of the House, said Yatnal, while stressing the need for a healthy debate to resolve issues.

Accusing the state government of using the Governor's speech as a vehicle for expressing its criticism of the Centre, Yatnal rued that excessive focus on guarantee schemes had resulted in development being ignored.

Rejecting the state's repeated claims of the Centre shortchanging Karnataka in the devolution of taxes, Yatnal said that Karnataka was receiving more in grants under the NDA than it did when the UPA was in power at the Centre. Citing survey reports, he said that the people across the nation continued to favour the NDA, and back Modi.

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal

As much as Rs 38,000 crore is pending in dues to contractors from various departments including Water Resources, Public Works, Urban Development, Housing, et al, rued Yatnal.

Delay in settling contractors' bills was plunging them in debt, he said. Yatnal also called into question diversion of SCP and TCP funds for the implementation of guarantee schemes, besides noting that change in dispensation in the state had not silenced allegations of 'commission'.

Congress govt is neglecting backward classes, alleges BJP

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BJP on Friday accused the ruling Congress of "neglecting" backward class corporations.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra spoke about the issue in the Legislative Assembly.

In a document released to the press later, the BJP said: "The Congress government is behaving as an anti-people government. Socio-economically extremely backward communities, like Madivala, Vishwakarma, Savitha, Hadpad, nomadic communities, Ambigas, Gollas, Ganigas, Tigala, Nekara and Kumbara communities have not received any benefits. Even the Kuruba and Ediga communities are facing a similar fate."

In the document, the party claimed that it released the entire amount of Rs 576.01 crore announced for 11 backward class corporations during its tenure in 2022-23, but claimed that the Congress had released only Rs 170.5 crore out of the Rs 341 crore that it had allotted in 2023-24.

As per the corporation-wise data mentioned in the document, the Congress-led state government released only Rs 50 crore of the allotted Rs 100 crore to the D Devaraj Urs Backward Classes Development Corporation, Rs 30 crore of the Rs 60 crore separately allotted for the Vokkaliga Development Corporation and Veerashaiva Lingayat Development Corporation, Rs 25 crore of the Rs 50 crore allotted for the Maratha Development Corporation and so on.

"The government must immediately release money to these corporations, so that students, unemployed and self-employed persons and women from backward communities, including Kurubas, get benefits. Or else, let the government accept that it's financially bankrupt," it said.

TRIBUTES TO FATHER OF THE NATION

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, ministers, legislators and officials pay tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of the death anniversary of the Father of the Nation, on Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Govt seeking kin's support to turn Kuvempu's house into a museum: Minister

BENGALURU, DHNS

Minister for Kannada and Culture Shivaraj Tangadagi on Friday said that the state government, which is planning to transform poet laureate Kuvempu's house in Mysuru into a museum, had reached out to his family seeking their co-operation for the endeavour.

"I met the members of Kuvempu's family recently, and they have laid down some conditions, some of which are quite big. We need to discuss some of them with the Chief Minister," Tangadagi informed the Legislative Council.

Responding to a question on the subject by BJP MLC Prathap Simha Naik, the minister said that the project had first been proposed in the 2018-19 State Budget.

Shivaraj Tangadagi

"The family had initially asked for Rs 5 crore, which went up to Rs 10 crore later. The price quoted during the BJP's tenure was Rs 15 crore. They have also laid down more conditions besides," he added.

The government's plan to transform former CM S Nijalingappa's house into a museum had met with success, Tangadagi said.

"The entire family of the former CM came together, and is co-operating with the government. The matter was settled at Rs 5 crore," the minister said.

Replying to another query by BJP MLC Dr Dhananjaya Sarji, Tangadagi reaffirmed the state government's commitment to educate people about the lives and deeds of Karnataka's illustrious personalities, and to that end, handbooks were being published and distributed to schoolchildren.

Plaint against BJP X handle for post on CM, DyCM

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee's legal cell has filed a complaint against the X handle of the BJP in Karnataka for an alleged defamatory post targeting CM Siddaramaiah, his deputy D K Shivakumar and other leaders.

"In this post on January 29, the photographs of the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and Ministers holding constitutional posts in Karnataka have been maliciously morphed/distorted under the label 'Scam Lord'. Furthermore, false and defamatory writing stating 'This is the true story of the Scam Empire of the @INCKarnataka government which is looting Karnataka day and night' has been published," the complaint said.

The complainant, N Narendra, also claimed that by using words like 'loot' and 'scam', an attempt has been made to incite hatred and unrest among the public. The police have acknowledged the complaint, but an FIR is yet to be registered.

DKS accuses opposition of misusing freedom

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday accused the opposition parties of "misusing" the freedom granted by law.

Speaking to reporters, he said: "It's acceptable that the Opposition criticises us and we criticise them. But everything has a limit. The opposition parties are misusing the freedom provided by the law."

When asked about the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) filing a case against the BJP, Shivakumar, who is also the KPCC president, said: "No individual or party should misuse the freedom like this. Hence, we had to go legal. Law will take its course."

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In Cherished Memory

Mr. Lalit Thusu
August 24th 1946 - January 29th 2026
Funeral service: 31st January 2026 at 2:30 pm, St Marks Cathedral, 1, M.G Road, Shanthala Nagar, Bangalore - 01
Followed by Burial service: Indian Christian Cemetery at 3:30 pm, Gate no :1 Hosur Road, Bangalore- 560025
Inserted by Bereaved Family

15th ANNIVERSARY

Smt. M. Chennamma
06.04.1950 - 31.01.2011
You left us this day fifteen years back, We remember you and miss you everyday.
Your loving Family

SAD DEMISE
With profound grief we wish to inform you of the sad demise of

SHRI K.N.MURTHY
12-12-1932 to 30-01-2026
(Retired General Manager, HAL)
who left for the heavenly abode on Friday 30th January 2026
FONDLY REMEMBERED BY
HARSHA MURTHY AND FAMILY
Contact : 9916138254

Nuclear plant at RTPS?: Central team's visit stirs up a hornet's nest

Power ministry committee conducted feasibility study

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The recent visit of a three-member committee from the Union Ministry of Power, to assess the feasibility of setting up a nuclear power plant at the Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS), has stirred a hornet's nest in Raichur.

Locals and several organisations are opposing the proposed project, fearing it could further endanger public health due to possible nuclear contamination.

According to a press release by the department, the Union government has plans to convert at least 10 ageing thermal power plants into nuclear power generation stations across India as these stations already have sufficient land, water availability and grid connectivity.

The region houses two coal-based thermal power stations — RTPS and Yermarus Thermal Power Station — with a combined generation capacity of 3,320 MW. Residents have long alleged that fly ash and water discharged from these plants have had an adverse impact on their health.

Basavaraj Kalasa, leader of the Raichur District Civic Forum, said the people have been demanding the Central government set up an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the district for over 1,300 days.

"Instead of providing us a healing touch by establishing an advanced medical facility, the Union government intends to add more poison to the region by setting up a hazardous nuclear power plant," he said.

Hyderabad Karnataka Horata Samiti State vice-president Razak Ustad said that neither deputy commissioner nor the elected representatives were aware of the team's visit.

However, RTPS Executive Director Ramesh H R said there was no need to give undue attention to the January 23 visit by the technical team, as it was merely part of a national-level exercise and does not amount to a decision to set up a nuclear power plant at Raichur.

In a press release, the Central government stated that this initiative is part of its ambition to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047, up from the current capacity of 8.8 GW. Converting old and retiring thermal power plants into nuclear power generation stations offers key benefits, including the availability of existing land, water resources and transmission infrastructure.

A file picture of Raichur Thermal Power Plant (RTPS). All eight units of RTPS are functioning at full capacity and none are nearing retirement, according to authorities.

'Basic assessment'

Ramesh said the assessment conducted by the team was very basic in nature. "They only recorded whether sufficient alternative land is available for a nuclear power plant and other preliminary details," he said, adding that setting up a nuclear power plant is a complex process that requires meeting multiple criteria and adhering to a very strict security checklist.

The executive director also clarified that all eight units of RTPS are functioning at full capacity and none are nearing retirement. The first unit of RTPS was commissioned in 1984–85 on nearly 1,300 acres of land, located about 20 km from Raichur city.

"There is no need for locals to fear, as the possibility of setting up a nuclear power plant — even if the site satisfies all conditions — is still far off. It would take at least a decade to complete the initial processes, including preparation of the detailed project report (DPR) and commencement of work," he said.

In December 2024, experts from the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) visited multiple sites in Koppal, Raichur, and Vijaypur districts to scout for potential locations for a nuclear power plant. The visits were met with strong opposition from local residents.

'Failing to cast vote would be a disservice to democracy'

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Hundreds of students and youth marched on the streets of Bangalore University's Jnanabharathi campus on Friday morning, spreading awareness about constitutional values as part of the 'Constitution is the Light-Step Forward Bengaluru' campaign.

The event, organised by *Prajavani* and *DH* in association with the state government's Social Welfare Department and Bangalore University, saw a massive turnout at the Venkatagiri Gowda Auditorium.

Former chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes H Kantharaj, Bangalore University Vice-Chancellor S M Jayakar, TPML COO Kiran Sundararajan, Prajavani Executive Editor Ravindra Bhat and a large number of students participate in the 'Constitution is the Light-Step Forward Bengaluru,' in Bengaluru on Friday.

Rights and duties

Addressing the gathering, former chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes and senior advocate H Kantharaj emphasised that fundamental rights are essential for a dignified life. "While everyone must enjoy freedom, it should not infringe upon the rights of others. That is the core philosophy of our Constitution," he said.

He continued: "Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated because he said this country does not belong to a few, but to everyone. The same idea is embodied in the Constitution drafted by Dr B R Ambedkar."

Kantharaj further noted that the Constitution is the "mother of all laws," and any legislation passed in Parliament or the Assembly must remain within its framework. He warned that failing to exercise the right to vote effectively a gift of the Constitution would be a disservice to democracy.

"Through the right to vote, we have the opportunity to choose whom we want and to defeat governments that act against the Constitution. The right to vote is a boon. If it is not used properly, it can turn into a curse," he cautioned.

Caste-based discrimination

"Discrimination in the name of caste and religion has still not reduced. The ideal of equal opportunity for all has not been fully realised. We must identify the reasons and correct them. We must avail ourselves of the facilities provided by the Constitution. If they are denied, we must have constitutional awareness to fight for them. We should move forward under the principles of social, economic and political justice, liberty, equality and fraternity," he advised.

"Two kinds of people act against the Constitution. One group consists of those who have no knowledge of our Constitution, and the other of those who know everything about it but refuse to accept it. The first group can be corrected by creating awareness about the Constitution. Trouble arises mainly from the second group, and we must ensure that does not happen," Kantharaj asserted.

BU Vice-Chancellor Prof S M Jayakar urged students to integrate constitutional values into their daily lives. "Our journey towards the Constitution should not end with this walk; it should be a lifelong commitment," he said, praising the media group's initiative to bridge the gap between legal experts and the common man.

The walkathon concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants, who marched through the lush greenery of the university campus, carrying slogans of equality and fraternity.

Kiran Sundararajan, Chief Operating Officer of The Printers (Mysore) Private Limited, was also present.

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New vertical under cyber command to tackle online child abuse

23 seed trainers from cybercrime police stations picked for training

BENGALURU, DHNS

Director General of Police (DGP) Pronab Mohanty said on Friday a new vertical would be added to the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) to focus on tackling abuse against children online, crimes against women and other vulnerable sections of society.

Mohanty, the head of Cyber Command Centre (CCC), said this while speaking at the inauguration of the 'Victim Centric Interviewing Training Programme' organised in collaboration with the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC).

"We are meeting at this platform to sharpen our skills in this kind of specialised investigation. After this, we expect you to go out and impart it to others. You are the core of a vertical that will deal with these types of crimes. This particular experiment will lead to a vertical within the CCC devoted to battling Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) online and crimes against women and other vulnerable sections of society on the internet," Mohanty told the officers and staff gathered in the programme.

Twenty-three seed trainers from the state police's cybercrime police stations — from the constabulary to the DGP — were picked for the two-day training initiative.

They will then impart the training to other officials across the state in the coming months.

Scott K Schonauer, Supervisory Special Agent, US Consulate; Pilar Ramirez, vice president, National Capacity Building at ICMEC; Guillermo Galarza, vice president, Partnerships and Law Enforcement Training; Dr Geeta Sekhon, Global Consultant, United Nations; Eva Veldhuizen Ochodnicanova, Forensic Psychologist; Dipti Peteti, Criminal Fraud Investigator, US Consulate General, Chennai-Regional Security Office; and ES Bijumon, Project Director, ICMEC (India), were present.

The Cyber Tipline, earlier operated within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), is now under the CCC after its establishment last year.

The tipline, which has since been strengthened and streamlined, primarily focuses on CSAM and gets information from the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), based on which the cases are registered, officials said.

Celluloid Nostalgia: 'Bangarada Manushya' revives open-air magic at BIFFes

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The main entrance of LuLu Mall was transformed into a time capsule on Friday. In a rare treat for cinephiles and the "Gen-Z" crowd alike, the Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy (KCA) kicked off its open-air screening series with the legendary 1972 Kannada classic 'Bangarada Manushya.'

The atmosphere was thick with nostalgia as a vintage 35mm projector, a rare dinosaur in the digital age, whirred to life. For many in the crowd, it wasn't just a movie; it was a pilgrimage. They welcomed back 'Annavru' with a standing ovation and whistles all over, fans screaming his name "Dr Rajkumar ge Jai."

"I saw this film during my engineering days in 1972 at Chamundeshwari Theatre in Mysuru. It ran for over a year," recalled sound engineer G S Prashanth, who helped maintain the antique Christie's projector used for the screening.

"To see these reels spinning again in the age of WhatsApp is a miracle. Most of these machines have been scrapped, but we restored this one to show the new generation what real film looks like," he said.

The screening, inspired by open-air festivals in cities, like Budapest and Paris, aims to bring the "festival of celebration" to the streets.

N Vidyashankar, artistic director of BIFFes, noted that the initiative was born from a desire to preserve Karnataka's celluloid heritage.

For the audience, the 174-minute epic starring Dr Rajkumar remains as relevant as ever. An elderly man who travelled from the outskirts of the city shared a memory: "In 1974, families would arrive in bullock carts just to catch a glimpse of this film. It taught us the value of the soil and Gandhi's vision of village development. Seeing it restored on a big screen under the stars brings back the soul of Kannada cinema."

Technical experts on-site, including veteran operators C H Chandrashekhar and Narayanaswamy, highlighted the Herculean effort required to play physical prints.

They recounted how, decades ago, cinema operators were felicitated for managing a single print for over 100 weeks without a scratch, a feat of precision lost in the digital plug-and-play era.

The open-air screening series by Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy kicked off with the screening of evergreen Kannada classic 'Bangarada Manushya', on Friday. DH PHOTO/ ASHWIN B M

10-year-old girl dies due to electric shock in school

SINDHANUR (RAICHUR DISTRICT), DHNS: A 10-year-old girl, identified as Tanushree Shamanna Bhajantri, died after suffering an electric shock at the government lower primary school at Kurukunda village in the taluk on Friday.

Tanushree Bhajantri

A class 5 student, Tanushree suffered electric shock while she was fetching water from a water filter in the school.

A cook tried reviving the child by administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Died en route

Tanushree was soon rushed to a local RMP doctor who referred her to the taluk hospital. The girl however died en route to the hospital.

The parents of the girl and the villagers expressed their anguish when the headmaster of the school claimed that the girl died of low blood pressure, following which, the parents took the body of the girl to taluk hospital for post-mortem, where it was found that she indeed died of electrocution

The Turvihal police have registered a case based on the complaint lodged by the girl's parents.

Man kills parents, younger sister; bodies yet to be found

KOTTUR (VIJAYANAGARA DISTRICT), DHNS: In a gruesome incident, a young man allegedly killed his mother, father and younger sister a few days ago in Kottur in Vijayanagara district.

However, police are yet to recover the bodies of the three victims of the crime. Meanwhile, the suspect – Akshay Kumar – was arrested in Bengaluru, and is being taken to Kottur.

Although Akshay has claimed that he dumped the bodies of his father Bheemraj (48), 44-year-old mother Jayamma, and sister Amrutha (18) in a lake in Sandur, Kottur police suspect that he may have buried their bodies at home.

"We have no clue as to where he has buried the bodies. We will be able to examine the bodies only once Akshay comes to Kottur, and takes us to the spot," said a senior police officer who is part of the investigation.

A few days ago, Akshay filed a complaint at the Tilak Nagar police station in Bengaluru, claiming that his parents and sister had gone missing.

He informed the police that he had brought them to Bengaluru to have them examined at the Jayadeva Hospital in the city. However, when the local cops in Bengaluru inquired at the Jayadeva Hospital, they found that no patient bearing the names of Akshay's parents and sister had been treated there.

Bengaluru police subsequently intimated the cops in Kottur.

Police in Kottur went to Akshay's house in Lal Bahadur Shastri Road, and enquired his neighbours.

Sniffer dogs were brought to his house, and fingerprint experts pressed into service at the spot.

Meanwhile, Vijayanagara district Superintendent of Police S Jahnavi and Deputy SP Mallesh Doddamani are camping at Akshay's house.

Sunetra Pawar likely to be next Maharashtra DyCM

Sunetra, from Page 1

"Making appointment at the top organisational position (the late leader was also party president) is not an issue currently. We are in the process of finalising the leadership transition," he added.

On whether Sunetra Pawar will be made the NCP legislature party leader and deputy chief minister, he said: "Sentiments of the people and that of the party are the same. We have to speak to the (Ajit Pawar) family (over key appointments), request them first (for approval)".

Bhujbal said the immediate task is to "fill the post of deputy chief minister by convening the NCP legislature party meeting"

"Many of us want Sunetra Tai to become the deputy chief minister, but the final decision would be of the MLAs and MLCs," Bhujbal said. "There is a mourning period, some have three days, some have 10 days. Patel and Tatkare are looking into those issues. In two to three hours, there would be more clarity. Yes, the legislature party meeting and swearing-in both can happen tomorrow," said Bhujbal.

Merger will take time

The leaders of NCP and NCP (SP) may be pitching for an immediate merger, but issues such as legal cases of the party and symbol has to be settled. Besides, a proper role of Supriya Sule has to be defined in the party.

On the other hand, some of the leaders who engineered the split are jittery at the prospect of Sharad Pawar back at the helm of affairs of the unified party.

Meanwhile, Kiran Gujar, member of Vidya Pratishthan and close associate of Pawar family, said: "It was Dada's last wish that this (merger of two factions of NCP) should happen. All should be united. Talks about this were happening throughout the family."

Man of Images: Panel decodes Andrzej Wajda's 360-degree influence on global film

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

The 17th Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFes) hosted a panel discussion on Friday, focusing on the enduring legacy of Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda.

Titled 'Polish Cinema and the Andrzej Wajda Legacy: Art, History, Cinema, Identity', the session explored how Wajda's visual storytelling transcended national borders to remain a beacon for filmmakers today.

The panel featured Malgorzata Wejsis-Golebiak, director of the Polish Institute in New Delhi, Joanna Lapinska, artistic director of the Gdynia Film Festival and N Vidyashankar, artistic director of BIFFes. The discussion was organised as the Polish Senate officially designated 2026 as the 'Year of Andrzej Wajda' to mark his centenary.

A panel discussion on the enduring legacy of Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda titled 'Polish Cinema and the Andrzej Wajda Legacy: Art, History, Cinema, Identity' was organised as part of the 17th Bengaluru International Film Festival on Friday. DH PHOTO/ASHWIN B M

A central theme was Wajda's mastery over imagery as a tool against censorship. Vidyashankar noted that while state censors in communist-era Poland scrutinised words, Wajda used cinematic devices and metaphors to communicate the "soul of the community."

"Wajda taught us that images can speak when words are silenced," he observed. His war trilogy, culminating in the iconic *Ashes and Diamonds*, was hailed as a definitive portrayal of a "lost generation," using a modern aesthetic that influenced global greats from Scorsese to India's own masters.

Joanna Lapinska highlighted the evolving landscape of Polish cinema, noting a shift towards young, expressive voices while maintaining Wajda's commitment to freedom.

Malgorzata Wejsis-Golebiak emphasised the importance of Indo-Polish collaboration, viewing cinema as a "common platform" for shared human emotions. The discussion also touched upon the upcoming Film City in Mysuru, with panellists expressing hope that the 'Polish School' of filmmaking would inspire the next generation of Karnataka's cinematic talent. As BIFF screens a retrospective of Wajda's classics, including *Kanal* and *Man of Marble*, the panel concluded that his work is not merely a historical record but a living lesson in artistic courage.

Right to menstrual health a part of right to life: SC

Menstrual health, from Page 1

"All school toilets shall be equipped with functional hand washing facilities with soap and water available at all times," the court said.

It ordered the Union government and all the states and UTs to ensure that its directions are strictly complied with within a period of three months.

In the 126-page judgment on a plea filed by Jaya Thakur and others, the court said the right to education has been termed as a multiplier right as it enables the exercise of other human rights.

"The Right to Education (RTE) forms part of the broader framework of the right to life and human dignity, which cannot be realised without access to education," the verdict said.

The substantive approach to equality under Article 14 demands that treatment be accorded with due regard to the individual, institutional, systemic and contextual barriers that impede the translation of rights in reality, it said.

"At the same time, the state, as a benefactor, is under an obligation to remedy such structural disadvantages."

"Inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures undermines the dignity of a girl child as dignity finds expression in conditions that enable individuals to leave without humiliation, exclusion or avoidable suffering," it said.

The court said privacy is inextricably linked with dignity.

As a corollary, the right to privacy entails a duty on the state to not only refrain from violating privacy but an accompanying obligation on the state to take necessary measures to protect the privacy of an individual.

Levying toll without building service road unconstitutional: High Court

AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

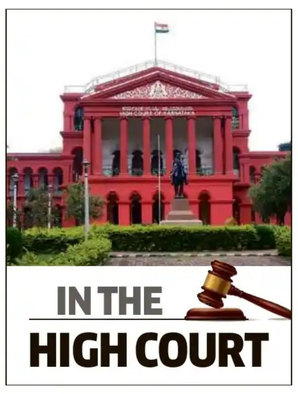
Levying toll charges without providing a service or alternative route is arbitrary and unreasonable, violating Articles 14, 19(1)(d) and 21 of the Constitution, the High Court of Karnataka has ruled.

It also held that toll collection without installing a Closed User Fee Collection System violates Rule 8 (3) of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj passed the judgement while directing the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) as well as the project proponent of National Highway 209 widening work to issue free local passes to the residents of Somanahalli and Nelaguli villages for the Somanahalli toll plaza on the Bengaluru–Kanakapura highway.

The passes shall be issued within 30 days without levy of any toll or user feee, and to all other similarly placed local residents who apply for such passes, subject to verification of their residency, enabling their unrestricted ingress and egress through the toll plaza for access to their residences, agricultural lands, workplaces and essential services, the court stated.

Manjesh Kumar and other villagers had moved the court in 2024, stating that the authorities had not considered their representations for either shifting the toll plaza from Somanahalli or building a service



road for easy travel between village panchayats.

The villagers contended that with no alternative/service road, they are compelled to pay toll to go from one panchayat area to another or from their house to their agriculture fields or to access any of their basic amenities. They also submitted that the jurisdiction of the newly created Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) extends beyond Somanahalli and that Section 8 (1) of the 2008 rules stipulates that a toll plaza can only be established 10 km away from municipal limits.

The NHAI, however, argued that the 10-km distance was only prescribed from municipal or town area limits, and there was no stipulation regarding the distance of a toll plaza from a village panchayat. It further submitted that cars or non-commercial vehicles owned by people residing within 20 km from a fee plaza could obtain a monthly pass in accordance with Rule 5.

"The contention that this burden may be mitigated through discounted or monthly passes overlooks the fundamental inequity inherent in such an approach. A citizen residing in the vicinity of a toll plaza ought not to be placed in a position where access to essential services is conditioned upon the capacity to make recurring payments, however modest such payments may appear in abstraction. Constitutional freedoms cannot be calibrated on assumptions of affordability, nor can dignity of movement be reduced to a subscription-based entitlement," Justice Govindaraj said.

The court stated said that in case of failure to comply with the directions, the authorities shall forthwith cease toll collection at Somanahalli toll plaza and remove and relocate it to a location in conformity with Rule 8.

Bacteria in Bengaluru soil may help build bricks in Mars, says IISc study

Bacteria, from Page 1

After establishing the bacteria's brick-forming skills, the researchers wanted to test if the strain would survive in the Martian soil that contains a chemical named perchlorate, up to one per cent. Two NASA probes — the Phoenix lander and Curiosity rover — detected its presence on the planet.

The IISc team, in collaboration with Punyasloke Bhadury, a scientist at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata, reported that the bacterial cells became stressed in the chemical's presence.

But to their surprise, they found that the presence of perchlorate made the bacteria better at gluing the soil together, but only if guar gum – essential for bacterial survival – and the catalyst nickel chloride are also present.

"When the effect of perchlorate on just the bacteria is studied in isolation, it is a stressful factor," said Swati Dubey, a PhD student at the University of Florida and first author of the study, published in PLOS One. "But in the bricks, with the right ingredients in the mixture, perchlorate is helping."

Dubey said the underlying biochemical processes might be enhancing the bacteria's bio-cementation skills, a theory that the team would explore. Other members of the team are Nitin Gupta and Rashmi Dixit.

The researchers aim to deploy this method as an alternative, sustainable building strategy to rely less on carbon-intensive cement-based processes, both on Earth and Mars.

"Such technologies can make future Mars landing missions smoother — by helping build better roads, launch pads, and rover landing sites. The uneven topography of the moon's surface has caused some landers to topple over," Shukla noted.

The team is also working on a proposal to deploy the bacteria in space as part of the Gaganyaan mission, to test their growth and behaviour under microgravity.

'Even HM helpless': HC calls for court-monitored probe into illegal sand mining

Sand mining, from Page 1

The bench also cited reports in print and electronic media on January 28, quoting the minister as saying that people across political parties are involved in illegal sand mining.

The court quoted certain media reports that sand is mined from the Krishna river basin continuously at night and that farmers had been complaining about damage to crops due to dust. The reports also note that bids were invited for sand extraction but have not yet been opened. The court further noted that as per media reports, many sharks are involved in the racket who do not want sand extraction to be legalised. If contracts for sand mining are awarded, the money would go to the exchequer and the mafias would lose their illegal earnings, the bench quoted media reports.

"There have been several deaths caused by vehicles involved in illegal sand mining in absence of CCTV cameras and check posts to monitor the movement of vehicles in areas of sand mining. A woman legislator from Raichur district has complained about the threat to her life from the sand mafias for raising the issue of illegal sand mining in her area," the bench quoted media reports.

"If the home minister of the state feels helpless in taking action to curb illegal sand mining by mafias, there cannot be any hope that the said illegal activity of sand mining in the state can be curbed by the state machinery. It is a serious issue and requires a court-monitored investigation by a central agency or a specially constituted investigating agency or a Special Investigation Team (SIT)," the court said, directing the state government to file a response to the suo motu petition within three weeks.

Confident Group's CJ Roy shoots himself dead in B'luru

Roy, from Page 1

"When a gunshot was heard, the staff rushed inside the chairman's room and found Roy lying in a pool of blood. It is too early to comment if the firearm used was his or whether it was licensed or not, as ballistics experts were yet to conclude their inquiry," highly placed sources told *DH*, adding that an autopsy will be conducted on Saturday.

The sources further said the I-T team had landed in Bengaluru from Cochin. The tax sleuths had quizzed him Thursday and they were planning to question him again at 3 pm on Friday.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the I-T department had been conducting searches and inquiries for the last two to three days.

"Initial reports say that Roy shot himself, but it is subject to further investigation. A case is being registered at the Ashok Nagar police station. The body was immediately shifted in an ambulance to a hospital, where he was declared dead. Scene of crime (SOCO) officers and ballistic teams are at the spot for an investigation," Singh said.

'Case of self-shooting'

"The police are in touch with the family members who will reach by flight, as they are not in India. Once they arrive, further details will be known. As of now, it looks like a case of self-shooting. Till all the angles are inquired into, further details cannot be shared. Based on the complaint, the relevant case will be taken up. We are yet to question and inquire with the IT officers to get further details."

Senior officers, including Singh, Joint Commissioner of Police (West) C Vamsi Krishna, and Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Akshay M Hakay, were at the spot.

Sources close to the probe said the I-T searches were a continuation of the searches that the department had done in December in both Cochin and Bengaluru. "It is learnt that I-T officials were on the premises but not inside the room when Roy shot himself," they said.

The website of Confident Group has a message that sums up its scale of projects in Bengaluru, Kerala and in different parts of the world. On Friday evening, the website briefly showed an error, likely due to increased traffic.

"We are a 19-year-old conglomerate with multiple business activities spread across India, the UAE and the USA. We also have the pride of designing and delivering multiple well-appreciated real-estate projects and products across Bangalore, Kerala and Dubai. We are proud to say that none of our gigantic portfolio of 159 projects has been stalled due to any reasons from the organisation, or property titles, or governmental issues. We have also achieved CRISIL 7 Star rating for a few of our projects, which makes us more unique," a statement from the firm reads.

K'taka Cybercrime Command Centre likely in 3-4 months

Cybercrime, from Page 1

"It is also a result of a High Court order last year by Justice M Nagaprasanna, following which the Cyber Command Centre (CCC) was set up in the state. It currently has around 3,000 officers and staff spread across the state," sources said.

The High Court order had noted that such an investigating agency "will be a pioneer in the new age crime by a new agency investigative branch."

"The idea is that the personnel trained specifically to handle cybercrime cases should be deputed to K4C. There should also be specialised cybercrime detectives, like those in the CID. Subsequently, specialised units will also monitor the dark web. They should not be deputed to other routine work at the whims of other unit heads. Otherwise, there is no point in imparting specialised training to the personnel," said the sources.

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Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ABRAR SHARIEF,** residing at # 24, 4thCross, 9th A Main, BTM Layout 1st Stage, Bengaluru-29, have changed my name to **ABRAR SHARIFF** vide affidavit dated 30-01-2026 before notary L. Gopalakrishna, Henceforth I shall be called as **ABRAR SHARIFF** only

I, CHANNAVEERAIAH. K.N., Residing at #64, 11th cross, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-97 have changed my name to CHANNAVEERAIAH vide affidavit dated 29/01/2026 before Notary N.Mahaesha, Bangalore

I, RAMMURTHY, Residing at #19, 2nd main, Ganapathinagar, Chikkabanavara, Bangalore-90 have changed my name as RAMAMURTHY. M., vide affidavit dated 29/01/2026 before Notary N.Mahaesha, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **NASIR KHAN USMAN KHAN,** residing at No. 154 A, Muslim Mohala, Sulibele, Hoskote Taluk, Bangalore Rural - 562129, have changed my name to **NASIR KHAN** vide affidavit dated 29-01-2026 before notary H.M. Govindaraju, Hosakote. Henceforth I shall be called **NASIR KHAN** only

I, SOURISH DASHOTTAR Resident at D410, Nandini Citadel Noble Residence, Chadrashekarpura, Akshayanagar, Bengaluru-560076 have changed my name to SOURISH PUNIT DASHOTTAR vide affidavit dated 30/01/2026 sworn before notary R.Basavaraja, Bengaluru

I, DEVENDRA RAJU. J., Residing at 826/3, 2nd cross, Kuvempu Layout, Chikkabanavara, Bangalore-90 have changed my name as DEVENDARAJU. J.,vide affidavit dated 29/01/2026 before Notary N.Mahaesha, Bangalore

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WE, RAVICHANDRAN Murugesan and Dhivya Thulasimani, residing at Krishna Brookfield Apartment, Flat no S13, AECS layout- B block, Kundalahalli, Bangalore- 560037, have changed our minor daughter's name from Anvika to Anvika Ravichandran (DOB:15/12/2021) vide affidavit dated: 06-12-2025, before Notary J.Anand Kumar, Bangalore

I, AJMAL KHAN. R/a #.387, 2nd floor, 12th cross, Near Cauvery Ceramics, J.P.Nagar Post, Bengaluru -560078 Have Changed My Minor Daughter's Name From AAIRA KHAN To AIZA KHAN vide Affidavit Dated 30/01/2026 before Notary Mamatha N.K Bangalore

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Failure to provide sanitary pads defeats RTE rights: SC

Says forcing girls to choose dignity or education unjust

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Friday said any condition that forces a girl child to choose between dignity and education cannot be regarded as just and equitable.

"The failure to provide sanitary napkins creates a gender-specific barrier that impedes attendance, and continuity in education, thereby defeating the substantive guarantee of free and compulsory education," a bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said.

In its judgment directing the provision of free sanitary pads to all girl students, the bench noted that Section 3 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act is not confined to the formal entitlement of school enrolment; rather, the right it guarantees is one of effective and continuous access to education.

"Section 3 incorporates the requirement that education shall be provided in conditions consistent with dignity and equality. The absence of sanitary napkins and safe disposal mechanisms compels menstruating girls to stay away from school for several days each month. When such circumstances persist, it is an indication that the State has failed in ensuring regular attendance and continuity of education. This results in direct denial of the right guaranteed under Section 3," the SC said.

The court said menstruation should not remain a subject spoken of only in hushed whispers, and that it is crucial for boys to be educated about the biological reality of menstruation.

"A male student, unsensitised towards the issue, may harass a menstruating girl child, which may discourage her from attending school."

The court felt the responsibility weighs even more heavily on the male teachers, and they must be sensitised to the needs of a girl child.

"For instance, a request to the restroom or the sudden need to leave the classroom must be treated with sensitivity rather than straight dismissal or invasive questioning. To put it briefly, we would say, ignorance breeds insensitivity, knowledge breeds empathy," it said.

Fault is not yours, SC tells girls

The SC said its pronouncement on providing free sanitary napkins to girl students must travel beyond the courtroom and law review reports, reaching the everyday conscience of society at large, reports DHNS.

"We wish to communicate to every girl child, who might have become a victim of absenteeism because her body was perceived as a burden, that the fault is not hers," the bench said. It explained that its judgment is not meant only for stakeholders in the legal system; it is also intended for the classroom, where girls often hesitate to ask for help.

It is for the teachers who wish to help but are constrained by a lack of resources, for the parents who may not realise the impact of their silence, and for society at large to recognise that progress is measured by how we protect the most vulnerable, it said.

Pak drone activity near LoC triggers Army warning fire

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Pakistani drones were reportedly spotted flying close to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Keran sector of north Kashmir on Thursday night, prompting the Indian Army to respond with warning fire.

Alert Army units detected multiple drones hovering near forward areas in the Keran sector of Kupwara district, officials said. Troops fired warning shots in accordance with standard operating procedures, after which the drones retreated back towards the Pakistani side. No casualties or damage were reported.

Following the latest sighting, a search operation was launched in the Keran sector to rule out the possibility of any arms or contraband being dropped. Officials said the situation along the LoC remains under close watch and that troops have been placed on heightened alert in view of recent intelligence inputs about possible infiltration and drone-based activities.

Keran sector has historically been a vulnerable infiltration route, and officials say the increased use of drones reflects a shift in tactics to bypass strengthened ground-based counter-infiltration grids.

The latest incident underlines the growing use of drones as a new and complex security challenge along the LoC and International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Security agencies believe the drones are primarily used for surveillance and for dropping arms, ammunition, explosives, and narcotics to terror modules operating in Kashmir.

Drones are also suspected of aiding infiltration attempts by providing real-time reconnaissance of Indian troop positions. Officials said Pakistan has increasingly relied on commercially available drones, many of which are believed to have been procured from China and Turkey.

CITU, AITUC decry CJI remarks blaming trade unions

He said unions responsible for hurting India's growth

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

COURT CONCERNS

- Say CJI's comments like advocates of "already-failed neo-liberal policies" of Modi govt
- Claim industry closures more in states with weak trade union movement
- Term SC refusal to entertain domestic workers' plea seeking minimum wages "deeply concerning

The CPM-backed CITU and CPI-affiliated AITUC on Friday took exception to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant's remarks that trade unionism was largely responsible for hurting India's industrial growth, saying they "resembled the political-economic illogic" of the Narendra Modi government and were a "misreading" of economic realities.

Urging the CJI to withdraw the remarks, made while dismissing a petition by Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam seeking minimum wages for domestic workers, the unions said the "outrage" over the statement would "sweep across the country and be forcefully expressed" during the nationwide strike called on February 12.

CITU general secretary Elamaram Kareem told reporters: "The most unfortunate and unconstitutional remarks of the CJI appear to resemble those of the advocates of already-failed neo-liberal policies and the political-economic illogic of the Modi government."

Blaming trade unions for industrial closures was "totally divorced from factual reality" as the Labour Bureau's reports on "Industrial Disputes, Closures, Retrenchments and Lay-offs in India" showed that there was a significant decline in industrial disputes, reaching a 17-year-low of 30 in 2023, in a "stark contrast" to 430 in 2006.

"The phenomenon of industrial closures, both legal and illegal, if examined closely, would reveal that the incidence of closures is much higher in states where the trade union movement is visibly weak or minimal," he said.

Referring to the Central government's submission in Parliament, he said 2.04 lakh private companies were closed over five years due to amalgamation, conversion, dissolution, or being struck off under the Companies Act, 2013.

"It is the crisis within the capitalist neoliberal order and the unbridled concentration and financialisation of the economy, at the cost of the MSME and the productive sector as a whole, that have led to increasing industrial closures. Trade unions can in no way be made a scapegoat to cover up the failure of the policy regime and economic governance," Kareem said.

AITUC general secretary Amarjeet Kaur said the refusal to entertain a domestic workers' plea seeking minimum wages was "deeply concerning, profoundly disturbing and inconsistent" with the constitutional mandate of social justice and dignity of labour.

RAGE RISING

Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav and other party members being detained during a protest rally under the 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram', in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

ED arrests former RCOM chief in Rs 40,000-crore fraud case

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has arrested former Reliance Communications (RCOM) president Punit Garg on money laundering charges in an alleged bank loan fraud case worth Rs 40,000 crore against group companies of businessman Anil Ambani.

The 61-year-old Garg was taken into custody on Thursday.

A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Delhi sent him to nine days of ED custody, the federal probe agency said in a statement.

Garg, ex-president and director of Reliance Communications Limited (RCOM), was arrested in connection with an ongoing investigation linked to an alleged Rs 40,000 crore bank fraud and money laundering by RCOM and its group entities, the ED said. There was no immediate comment from the Reliance Group.

The ED had said on Wednesday that it had attached shares and mutual funds in the name of Garg's wife.

"Garg, while holding senior managerial and directorial positions in RCOM over an extended period from 2001 to 2025, was actively involved in the acquisition, possession, concealment, layering, and dissipation of proceeds of crime generated from the said bank fraud," the ED claimed.

The laundered funds were "diverted" through multiple foreign subsidiaries and offshore entities of RCOM, it claimed.

As president of RCOM, Garg was handling the global enterprise business of the company from 2006 to 2013. He also served as president (regulatory affairs) from 2014 to 2017.

In October 2017, Garg was appointed as executive director of RCOM; from April 2019 to April 2025, he served as a non-executive director of RCOM, according to the agency. It was found that the proceeds of crime generated from this alleged fraud were "diverted" for the purchase of a luxury condominium apartment in New York's Manhattan.

CHARGESHEET

Punit Garg

- A PMLA court sent Garg to 9-days custody
- ED says Garg involved in acquisition, possession, concealment, layering, and dissipation of proceeds of crime
- Proceeds of crime "diverted" to purchase of luxury condominium apartment in New York's Manhattan

Omar's remarks on safety of J&K youth raise job creation concerns

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's remark that he "cannot ask J&K youth to work outside" following recent attacks on Kashmiri shawl vendors by rightwing elements in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh has reignited a debate that goes beyond safety and into the core of governance: where are the promised jobs at home?

Omar Abdullah

Multiple incidents of harassment and physical assault on Kashmiri shawl sellers and seasonal workers have been reported from Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, reviving fears that have long accompanied Kashmiri labour migration.

Omar's response, acknowledging the insecurity faced by young Kashmiris outside the UT, was widely seen as empathetic. Yet, it also exposed a glaring policy vacuum.

Opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Zuhaib Yousf Mir captured the growing unease in a post on X, noting that while the CM had rightly acknowledged the fear gripping Kashmiri youth, "the pertinent question is, if not beyond Kashmir, then where?" He asked what future awaited young people at home and what concrete steps the elected National Conference (NC) government had taken since it came to power in October 2024.

Employment was central to the NC's 2024 election campaign. The party repeatedly promised to generate one lakh jobs, presenting itself as a corrective to years of economic stagnation and high unemployment.

More than a year after assuming office, however, there is little publicly available data to demonstrate large-scale job creation directly attributable to the government's policies.

Report calls for stronger corporate transition planning

MUMBAI, DHNS: With India requiring cumulative investments of $10 trillion (Rs 883 lakh crore) to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, credible corporate climate transition planning was fast becoming a critical need.

Yet, transition planning among corporates remains fragmented and largely driven by compliance, said an Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis report.

The absence of dedicated transition plan disclosures within the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework, combined with limited guidance on financial materiality and forward-looking metrics, has resulted in disclosures that are difficult to compare, verify, or use meaningfully for investment and lending decisions, said the report.

It examined 33 companies in six high-emitting sectors, and identified three systemic weaknesses.

First, transition ambition rarely translates into quantified, time-bound, and financially integrated pathways, with limited linkage between targets, CapEx, revenues, and risk management. Second, governance structures are present, but weak. And finally, disclosures are fragmented and backward-looking, reducing their usefulness for capital providers.

Deccan Centre for South India's global engagement launched

CHENNAI, DHNS: The Deccan Centre for International Relation, an independent think tank that would aim to enhance international engagement of the five states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, and the Union Territories of Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Puducherry, was launched here on Friday.

The Deccan centre was established by the Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR), and the founders of Krea University.

RELIABLE RECOVERY

Metals from e-waste: IIT-M shows the green way

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) have developed an innovative, green, and sustainable method to recover valuable metals from electronic waste (e-waste) using eco-friendly solvents derived from natural compounds.

This breakthrough could pave the way for safer and more eco-efficient e-waste recycling practices that protect the environment while supporting India's circular economy goals, the IIT-M said.

In their study, the team developed a green solvent from thymol (derived from thyme) and capric acid, which effectively dissolved copper metal. The dissolved copper was then safely extracted using trisodium citrate, a non-toxic chemical, and subsequently used to synthesise copper nanoparticles — materials with significant industrial and technological applications.

By adjusting the pH of the solution, the researchers could produce different forms of copper, such as copper oxide nanoparticles and pure copper metal. The process was also successfully extended to recover iron from real e-waste samples like printed circuit boards and copper sheets.

E-waste, one of the fastest-growing waste streams globally, contains a wealth of recoverable metals such as copper, gold and iron. Conventional recycling methods, however, rely on harsh chemicals that generate toxic effluents and often yield metals in impure forms.

The research was conducted by Prof Ranjit Bauri, Prof S Pushpavanam and Sinu Kurian, PhD. Their findings were published in The Journal of Sustainable Metallurgy.

Pushpavanam said that, unlike conventional acid-based extraction techniques, this method is biodegradable, non-toxic and water-efficient, generating no hazardous waste. "Its ability to recover multiple metals and directly produce valuable nanomaterials makes it more versatile and sustainable than other existing approaches," he added.

Aeronautical Development Agency
(Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India)
PB No. 1718, Vimanapura Post, Bangalore-560017

Advt No.: ADA:ADV-137:2026 Date: 27-01-2026

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR GENERAL-ADA

Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) is an Autonomous Body and a Society under the Dept of Defence (R&D), Ministry of Defence, Govt of India, entrusted with the task of Design and Development of both the Airforce and Naval versions of Light Combat Aircraft (Tejas). ADA has also been entrusted with Design and development of LCA Mk II, AMCA and other advanced technology developmental project of Government of India.

2. Applications are invited from eligible candidates for the post of Director General-ADA (Pay Level-16).

3. For details/full text of the advertisement, please visit ***www.ada.gov.in*** Queries (if any) may be sent by mail to adminhr.ada@gov.in

Director (Admin & HR), ADA

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Division Ballari
Email: ee_pwdbellary@yahoo.com Telephone No: 08392 -266123

No: EE/PWD/BD/TS-3/KKRDB/2025-26/5589 Dated : 28-01-2026

Short Term Tender Notification (Two Cover System)

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division, Ballari invites the tenders for the works and Goods detailed in the table from the eligible contractors registered in Karnataka Public Works Department, through Karnataka public procurement portal. Two cover tender procedure as per KTPP Act shall be followed. The tender documents can be downloaded through the web-site **https:kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For any additional information the suppliers/tenderers may contact the office of the undersigned during office working hours. The following works and Goods indent numbers are: 1) PWD/2025-26/IND0201, 2) PWD/2025-26/IND0202, 3) PWD/2025-26/IND0203, 4) PWD/2025-26/IND0204, 5) PWD/2025-26/IND0205, 6) PWD/2025-26/IND0206 and 7) PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT32441 (General Category)

Note : Any changes either in tender dates or any other conditions and also re-tender, tenderers can view in KP Procurement Portal. No Separate Tender notification will be published in the News paper. in this regard.

1)Venue, Date and time of Pre Bid Meeting for the works: **04-02-2026 at 11.00 AM in the office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Ballari.** 2)Last dates for queries (through KP-procurement portal: **09-02-2026 upto 12.00 Hours.** 3)Last date for submission of tenders through kp-procurement portal: **13-02-2026 upto 16.00 Hours.** 4)Date and time of opening of Technical Bids: **16-02-2026 at 10.30 Hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Ballari**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Ballari.

DIPR/Ballari/950/KSMCA/2025-26

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
KARNATAKA STATE AIDS PREVENTION SOCIETY
Arogya Soudha, 4th Floor, 1st Cross, Magadi Road, Bangalore-560023.
Tel: 080-29557021 E-mail: pdksaps@gmail.com

No: KSAPS/PRC/06/2025-26 Date: 30.01.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (TWO TENDER) THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT

Tender (Two Cover) are invited for Supply of ARV drug Abacavir 300 mg IP Tablets (Single Pill) and Tab Lamavudine 100 mg.) under E-Procurement System. Details are available at e-procurement website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. Last date for submission of tender on **20.02.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.**

Sd/- Project Director, KSAPS, Bangalore

DIPR/CP/SPAN/5293/2025-26

Government Of Karnataka
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION OF POLICE, MYSURU CITY
Mirza Road, Nazarbad, Mysuru-570010
Phone: 0821-2418300, 2418304, 2418575

No:COP/M.C/ಸಂಗ್ರಹ/154/2025-26 Date :30.01.2026

Tender Notification

The Commissioner Of Police, Mysuru City invited the following tender **"Supply and maintenance of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drones) for Mysuru City"** - as under.

SL NO	Tender No.	Approx. Tender value
01	KSP/2025-26/INDO516 Dt.23.01.2026	1,00,00,000/-

The Information of last date and time for submission of bid and other details can obtained at e-procurement portal **https://kppp Karnataka.gov.in** For more information, please contact the above office.

Sd/- for Commissioner of Police, Mysuru City

DIPR/MYSURU/1582/SSC/2025-26

ಡಿ. ದೇವರಾಜ ಅರಸು ಹಿಂದುಳಿದ ವರ್ಗಗಳ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ
ದೇವರಾಜ ಅರಸು ಭವನ, 4ನೇ ಮಹಡಿ, ನಂ 16ಡಿ, ಮಿಲ್ಲರ್ ಟ್ಯಾಂಕ್ ಬೆಡ್ ಏರಿಯಾ, ವಸಂತನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು– 560052, ದೂ.080–22374832, 22374834
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್: mddbcdc@gmail.com, Web : www.dbcdc.karnataka.gov.in

DBCDC/AD/2025-26/07/SE0003 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29.01.2026

EOI ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
(ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ)

Supply of Four-Wheeled Electric Food Kiosk Vehicles (EVs) under the Food Channel (Kiosk) Scheme of the Government of Karnataka, implemented through D. Devaraja Urs Backward Classes Development Corporation Limited (DBCDC). ಗಾಗಿ EOI ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದೆ. ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ ವೀಕ್ಷಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಲು ದೂ.080–22374832, 22374834.

1) Pre-qualification ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29.01.2026
2) Pre-ಬಿಡ್ ಸಭೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.02.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:30 ಗಂಟೆ
3) EOI ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 13.02.2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5:30 ಗಂಟೆ
4) Pre-qualification ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.02.2026 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಗಂಟೆ.

ಸಹಿ/–
ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು
ಡಿ. ದೇವರಾಜ ಅರಸು ಹಿಂದುಳಿದ ವರ್ಗಗಳ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ನಿಗಮ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

ವಾ.ಸಾ.ಸಂ.ಇ/ವಾಪ್ರ/5319/ಆಕಾರ್/2025–26

DECCAN HERALD
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Water stress signals a looming breakdown

In a new report by United Nations researchers, there is a warning for the world – that it is entering an age of water bankruptcy, where a deepened crisis escalates to a breakdown with no assured paths to recovery. The report, published ahead of the fourth UN Water Conference to be held this year in the United Arab Emirates, says the world is now living beyond its hydrological means in the post-crisis era. It notes that many rivers, aquifers, and wetlands have crossed thresholds beyond which recovery to historical "normal" conditions is unlikely. Analysing global data, it says that what once appeared as temporary droughts, shortages, or pollution shocks have become chronic features. The time for warnings is over; it is now the time for the consequences of not heeding those warnings.

According to the report, these conditions have arisen because water consumption has exceeded nature's ability to replenish the resources; climate change has accelerated the degradation. Nearly half the global population experiences severe water scarcity for at least one month a year. The deficit causes reservoirs to go dry, cities to sink, water to be rationed, crops to fail, and wildfires and dust storms to rise and spread. Iran and Afghanistan are among the worst-affected countries. Tehran is going through a once-in-a-century drought, and prayers for rain are being held across Iran. There has even been a warning, considered extreme, that Tehran may have to be evacuated and residents moved to the south of the country. The crisis is not limited to countries of the Global South. Regions in Europe and the United States are also witnessing a severe crunch.

The crisis is heading to a point of no return, already impacting half of the world's population

Water shortage is triggering conflict within and between countries, in line with the predictions for water wars. These frictions will have unpredictable political consequences. The UN report says the situation may still be salvaged if the seriousness of its contents is appreciated and timely steps for mitigation and adaptation are taken. Solutions may vary from place to place because the intensity and fallouts are different. India is among the countries that will be most hit because of a shortage of water for drinking, agriculture, and other purposes. The shortage has severely impacted agricultural production in some parts of the country. This is a crisis of life that calls for collective, informed responses. Responsible consumption, scientific conservation and recycling, and the adoption of technology still offer a potent strategy. Results will hinge, as always, on how well this bankruptcy is understood and how proactive the approaches can get.

A fast lane for the entitled

The Karnataka legislature has, once again, demonstrated an ability to elevate a personal inconvenience into a matter of grave public importance. While potholes claim lives, public transport crumbles, and classrooms leak, the House found time to passionately debate the trauma of elected representatives being stopped at toll plazas. The trigger came from Congress legislator S N Subbareddy, who complained that MLAs and MLCs were being "harassed" at toll plazas despite being legally exempt from paying toll charges. The exemption itself is not in dispute. Rule 11 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, grants state legislators toll-free passage within their own states upon production of a valid identity card. But the leaders would like to believe that this statutory compliance is an act of malice.

Legislators are entitled to 'exempted Fastags', which are recognised by toll plaza readers, allowing vehicles to pass seamlessly without any fee being charged. If the Fastag is inactive or the toll staff suspect that the elected representative is not travelling in the vehicle, they can ask for the identification card issued by the state legislature. These checks are not harassment; they are a response to rampant abuse of exemptions by family members, personal staff, and political freeloaders. For those accustomed to unchecked privilege, accountability feels like an insult. This exposes a deeper malaise – an entrenched VIP racism that treats ordinary citizens as obstacles and equality as an affront. One wonders why a far simpler solution never surfaced in the House. Why not use a regular Fastag and pay like everyone else? The government could easily reimburse the charges or issue annual passes. Even with a standard Fastag, a toll plaza is crossed in mere seconds. But it appears democracy comes under siege when a legislator has to pause for a few seconds behind ordinary motorists.

Karnataka legislators' outrage over toll plaza checks is a disturbing pointer to an entrenched VIP culture

Predictably, the outrage was palpable across party lines. Opposition leader R Ashoka took the argument further, lamenting the absence of permanently open "VIP lanes" and suggesting that legislators should not be made to wait in line. Speaker U T Khader directed officers to engage with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to address the technical issues. When the NHAI recently reiterated these exemptions, netizens reacted with outrage, questioning why politicians should be treated like kings. But somewhere along the way, legislators seem to have forgotten a basic truth: they are servants of the people, not royalty of a bygone era to demand a fast lane through public life.

A PROMISE AUDITED

'Skilled' India is failing the employment test

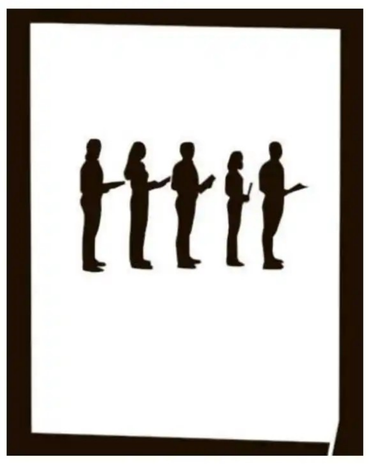
Flawed priorities have led to poor PMKVY outcomes. Skilling must be demand-driven and tied to jobs

SANTOSH MEHROTRA AND HARSHIL SHARMA

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)'s 2025 Performance Audit has underlined the failures in the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Its verdict is sobering: years of skill programmes have produced mountains of certificates but few employed youth. From 2015-22, three phases of PMKVY were run with a combined outlay of ~Rs 14,450 crore, yet only about 1.1 crore of the 1.32 crore targeted trainees got certified. Only those certified under short-term training and special projects (56.14 lakh candidates) were tracked for employment outcomes, of whom just 41% (23.18 lakh) secured placements. Indeed, official data show PMKVY claimed a 54% placement rate, but independent analysis pegs the figure at barely 22%. In short, despite high annual budgets, a large share of India's "skilled" workforce remains unemployed or underemployed, or at best, when employed, they are in the unorganised sector. But that is what the poorly educated and school dropouts have done in any case for decades.

The focus of Skill India schemes has been on churning out certificates, often from very short courses, rather than on real learning. PLFS data shows courses longer than two years shrank from 29% (2017-18) to ~14% by 2023-24, while sub-six-month courses rose from 22% to 44%. Recognition of prior learning certifications among current workers soared from 1.45% of the labour force in 2017 to 11.6% by 2023 – an inflation of numbers that masks true skill-building. The result is stark: formally certified workers face a 17% rate of unemployment, versus just 4% rate among the informally trained (the latter likely working without credentials). In other words, certificates are not translated into employability.

The CAG audit highlights acute misalignment between where India *needs* skills and where PMKVY trains people. National Skill Development plans (2015-22) projected over 60% of new skill demand in construction, logistics, hospitality, etc., yet PMKVY's top-trained sectors were electronics, apparel, retail, logistics and beauty/wellness. Apparel alone accounted for 28.4% of all certifications, though it was not among the top-demand sectors. PLFS data shows that apparel, a labour-intensive sector that should have been creating jobs, saw a fall in employment in the first six years of this government. Similarly, at the state level, >50% of projected gaps were in five large states (Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal), but these saw under 35% of fresh training. In contrast, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana – with relatively lower projected need – accounted for 22% of PMKVY trainees. In plain terms, training was lopsided: e.g. Maharashtra had ~13.2% of skill gap but only ~5.8% of trainees, while Uttar Pradesh had 8.9% of need but 14.8% of trainees.



PMKVY 4.0 (2022-26) was launched with reforms aimed at data and accountability. Candidate registration through Aadhaar e-KYC, Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) and student guidance through AI were additions. Rewards have shifted from cash to in-kind (kits and training material), and in a big change, placement is no longer a paid performance metric.

These are welcome steps. Yet CAG notes they are not fully implemented. As of October 2024, key IT validations still lagged, and in PMKVY 4.0, audits already found underage or unqualified trainees slipping through. Earning the cash reward had at least linked employer demand to the training; removing placement-based incentives could risk further complacency. In short, PMKVY 4.0's e-KYC and SIDH improvements are positive but not sufficient.

Engaging industry on jobs

Beyond these tweaks, the skill mission needs deeper reform. Training must be demand-driven and genuinely industry-led, not just government-mandated. We have long argued, and the CAG data reinforce this conclusion that real employer engagement in curriculum, financing, and credentialing is crucial. Other countries operate sectoral training funds or payroll levies that bind firms into the system. More than 40 countries already use such levies to finance vocational training. Brazil's industries impose a 1% payroll tax to fund apprenticeships, and South Africa's "equity training fund" channels corporate levies to upskill marginalised groups. India should explore a similar model: a national skill fund partly raised from firms, not only public coffers. This would incentivise companies to invest in training and provide a much larger and steadier resource base. Public and private sector investment in skills should be complementary – the State building capacity and standards, but firms sharing the cost and owning the content.

The CAG observed that apprentices remain a tiny fraction of the 570-million workforce – only half a million formally – and rightly points out that on-the-job training must grow. We have pointed out that a "collective skill formation" system where firms, colleges, and labour agencies collaborate with clear roles outperforms purely State or purely *laissez-faire* models. The audit itself implies this: it flags that national and state skill missions failed to mobilise industry demand meaningfully. Strengthening Sector Skill Councils with real employer power (and accountability) so curricula match real jobs could be a priority. For this to succeed, the financial involvement of the private sector is necessary.

Finally, skill initiatives must link tightly to jobs. CAG and past studies note the absence of effective labour-market information systems or job-matching. Training without guaranteed placement is wasteful. The Skill India portal could integrate with high-quality job exchanges. Learning from private job platforms and overcoming India's digital divide, a unified 'Rozgar Bazaar' linking skills to local vacancies could greatly improve outcomes. Crucially, skill policy should explicitly converge with employment policy, matching trades taught to local demand.

We need a genuine shift towards quality, demand-orientation, and shared responsibility. That means involving the private sector fully in design and finance, building true apprenticeships, and bridging skills and jobs through technology and outreach. A robust public-private skill ecosystem with joint training funds, rigorous curriculum standards, and vibrant job linkages is the way forward. India's demographic dividend depends on it.

(Santosh is a research fellow at the IZA Institute of Labour Economics, Bonn; Harshil is a labour economist. Views expressed are personal)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Walks classified, a taxman's way

Old habits linger as an evening walk turns into a study of human variety

NAJIB SHAH

I live most fortunately in a gated community—an oasis, which seems a million miles away from the cratered roads and the traffic '*hogilla*' reality outside. It is a relatively small community – a rough census (no caste or sub-caste details, please) would suggest that the number, including the four-legged furry pets, would be in the region of 400. While all the four-legged variety do go for a walk, many of the other community members also venture out for a walk; to see them walk is most interesting. And I am not talking of the speed.

Some walk looking seriously at the ground beneath their feet, deeply examining their toes or footwear or the asphalt. Not for them the upward glance at what lies ahead or above. Another lot looks at the distant horizon. Their eyes clouded, almost avoiding any eye contact. The third lot look around for familiar faces, and depending on the time of the day and their disposition at that point in time, smile. You can meet the same person on another day, and they would walk past you with nary a glance. The fourth are the type who wish to say hello and smile but are uncertain about the response. So, they do smile nevertheless and hope that they will get a response.

The fifth, increasingly becoming common, is the type who keeps looking at the phone or with headphones listening to a podcast. They have no time for what is in front of them, beside them or above them. Their mind does not register that they are walking, which is incidental to the activity of seeing or listening. And then there are couples—men invariably seem in a hurry, while women struggle to keep pace. My theory is that the distance between the male and the female is directly proportional to the number of years of marriage.

And then we have children. Loud chatter with even louder guffaws of laughter pierces the late evening, which is when they set out. Full of youthful exuberance, they are not even walking -- they are floating in air. And then there are the amblers who walk for the companionship, not for exercise -- groups of ladies and gentlemen discussing everything from recipes to the politics of the nation, state and community. And in all these varieties there are those who drag their feet, apparently keen to promote the sales of footwear by rapidly tearing the soles of their footwear.

Talking of varieties, and since I am a (very) retired tax man who cannot resist classification – how else do you tax? – I have also done an exercise of classification of walks. That is a story for another time. But I can tell you my experience -- I read that walking backwards is good. I did it once. A senior citizen saw me with great amazement and a tinge of sympathy. I immediately turned around and have not turned back since!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Missing: Equity in higher education

The Supreme Court's decision to stay the UGC's 2026 regulations on caste-based discrimination raises questions that go far beyond legal technicalities. While the Court's concern about vague definitions and the potential for social division deserves attention, the broader reality of discrimination within higher educational institutions cannot be brushed aside. At the same time, the Court is right to insist on precision. Regulations that are unclear invite misuse and erode credibility. What is required is not abandonment, but careful redrafting of definitions that are inclusive, mechanisms that are fair, and safeguards that prevent both exclusion and excess. A casteless society cannot be achieved by denying caste, but by addressing it honestly. The stay should become an opportunity to strengthen, not stall, the pursuit of equity in higher education.
Sruti Bera, Bengaluru

Corrupt system

Apropos 'Contractors warn of statewide stir if Rs 37K cr dues not cleared' (Jan 30), when Congress was in opposition in Karnataka, it aggressively highlighted delayed payments to contractors and alleged commission demands under the BJP government, a campaign that significantly contributed to the BJP's defeat. Today, the Karnataka State Contractors' Association levels identical charges against the Congress government. Beyond political irony, the episode exposes a deeper systemic failure. Delayed payments and an entrenched commission culture encourage cost-cutting, compromised workmanship, and prolonged execution.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Strategic deal with EU

The India-EU trade agreement marks a pragmatic shift in strategy amidst global disruptions ('A deal to deepen trade as strategy, Jan 29). It wisely moves beyond stalled talks with the US, instead forging a vast economic bloc to bolster mutual resilience. The selective concessions, protecting India's sensitive sectors while opening others, reflect a balanced negotiation. This deal is more than commerce; it is a geopolitical statement.
K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

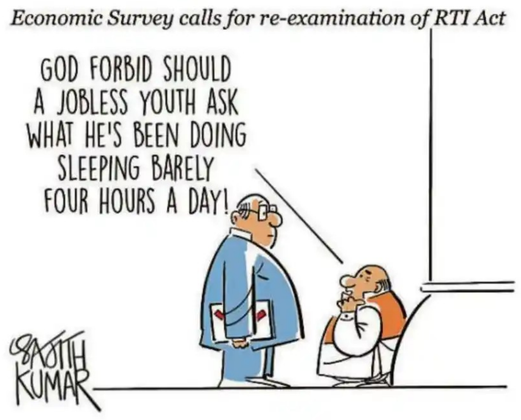
I have never agreed with any wrong comment against Rahul (Gandhi). He is a sincere leader.

Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP

All things are subject to interpretation. Whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth.
Friedrich Nietzsche

TO BE PRECISE

Economic Survey calls for re-examination of RTI Act



IN PERSPECTIVE

Mobility budgets need an equity push

Congestion in cities like Bengaluru can be traced to a skewed budgeting focus on vehicular movement

NITHYA RAMESH AND VENKATAKRISHNAN ASURI

Mobility in India's largest cities continues to worsen, with urban sprawl, poor quality of roads, insufficient public transport, and an unchecked increase in private vehicle ownership resulting in increased travel times, productivity drops, and reduced air quality. Nowhere is this connection between broken roads and declining quality of life more evident than in Bengaluru.

Over 2,000 vehicles are added to Bengaluru's roads every day, making it the city with India's highest private car ownership. Bengaluru has 823 vehicles per kilometre of road – a density that has paralysed movement. A Bengaluru citizen spends the equivalent of 3 days and 23 hours in rush hour traffic annually. This translates to an estimated annual loss of Rs 20,000 crore. Road safety, too, is a grave concern with the occurrence of one pedestrian death every 30 hours.

The solution is straightforward and proven globally. Cities cannot be designed for private vehicles; vehicular congestion cannot be solved by building more roads. Instead, cities must prioritise moving people through walkable roads and robust public transit – a combination of buses, trains, and metro. Tokyo and New York City have demonstrated that investing in public transit and managing vehicle demand, rather than endlessly expanding road capacity, delivers better outcomes for citizens and economies.

Yet, Indian cities continue to invest primarily in auto-centric infrastructure: flyovers, signal-free corridors, and ring roads. The problem is not a lack of solutions, but a failure of budget priorities. An equitable budget would enable balanced distribution of resources to address urban mobility holistically.

The first step is to shift the undeniable political and administrative focus on solving for vehicular movement alone, evident from budgetary allocations at the union, state, and city levels. At the union level, there has been inequitable spending on highways vs urban roads. An estimated Rs 7.9 lakh crore has been spent between 2014 and 2023 to build 23,268 km of highways, and Rs 3.96 lakh crore since 2000 to build 8.35 lakh km of rural roads. This has reduced vehicular travel time between cities by up to 50%, and between rural areas and the nearest urban centres by 25-35%. There has been no similar investment in urban roads.

States, too, do not allocate sufficient budgets for urban roads and pedestrian infrastructure – Uttar Pradesh is a notable exception (the state invested Rs 3,000 crore to redevelop 285 km of urban roads in 17 municipal corporations with a focus on walkability). At the city level, the pattern of disproportionate spending continues. An analysis of Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, and Hyderabad in 2025 shows that on average, 11.8% of city budgets are allocated for mobility infrastructure. Of the entire budget, only 2.98% is earmarked for pedestrian needs and holistic redevelopment of urban roads, with the rest allotted to auto-centric projects. Bengaluru allocated a mere 1.25% for its pedestrian infrastructure; the share was 6.96% for Mumbai, 3.68% for Chennai, and 2.95% for Hyderabad.

An even spread

Solutions must begin with equitable budgets that distribute resources across pedestrian, transit, and vehicular infrastructure. Mobility funding should reflect actual usage patterns, not favour vehicle movement alone. Investing in pedestrian infrastructure moves people faster and improves connectivity to public transport, jobs, and education.

One approach to proportionate allocation: for every rupee invested in auto-centric infrastructure, cities could allocate the same to pedestrian facilities and public transportation. In the 2024 budget, Bengaluru allocated Rs 12,000 crore for the construction of 17 signal-free corridors and Rs 17,698 crore for a 16.7-km tunnel project. Even if Bengaluru matched the tunnel project's budget with equal investment in footpaths and modern buses, the impact would be transformative. At approximately Rs 3 crore per km for a two-metre-wide paved footpath, Rs 8,849 crore would yield around 2,950 km of walkable paths, covering 20% of the city. Allocating the same amount towards modern air-conditioned electric buses, priced at Rs 2 crore per bus, would allow the procurement of around 4,500 new buses. Bengaluru currently has 6,500 buses operational. This approach would move far more people, far faster.

These budgetary allocations need to be supported with mandatory road design standards – such as Tender S.U.R.E., IRC 86, and 103 – that focus on pedestrian priority, urban designers in engineering departments to implement the guidelines, and procurement reforms for quality construction and road maintenance.

With planning for the 2026-27 budget underway, the newly-formed Greater Bengaluru Authority can pioneer an approach where budgets reflect how citizens actually move, with substantial allocations for pedestrian infrastructure, public transit, and complete streets. For Bengaluru's residents, this decision could shape the quality of life for decades to come.

(Nithya is Director – Planning and Design, Jana Urban Space Foundation; Venkatakrishnan is a student at IIT Madras)

Bangladesh: From breakdown to ballot

SREERADHA DATTA

After a bloody struggle with an undemocratic and repressive government, followed by another difficult experience of 18 months of poor governance and deteriorating law and order, Bangladesh is finally heading into the 13th parliamentary elections on February 12. Bangladeshis will also be responding to five key questions of the national referendum being held simultaneously. The referendum holds the key to constitutional reforms, demanded by the youth movement in July-August 2024. The nation has seen various faultlines emerge over the past one-and-a-half years, with identity questions being revisited and competing nationalism finding loud expressions. An elected government will hopefully usher in much-needed political and economic stability in Bangladesh.

This election, however, will witness a hard and bitter fight. Over 127 million voters will have to choose from around 2000 candidates contesting for the 300 parliamentary seats. The absence of the Awami League from the electoral space has led to distinct reconfigurations, and the election has essentially become a contest between the two former partners – Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-I-Islami (JI).

Battlelines redrawn

Tarique Rahman, the heir to the BNP's high seat, returned to a rousing welcome in Dhaka late last month. He laid out his 'plan' for Bangladesh and called for national unity to fulfil the people's aspirations, while wishing to maintain equidistance from India and Pakistan. The BNP's electoral slogan, 'Sobar Aage Bangladesh' (Bangladesh before Anything else), effectively captures the public mood. But, for a political party that has remained politically marginalised for over 17 years, the comeback poses many challenges.

Attempting to make a strong claim for the vacant centrist position, the BNP, leading a coalition of 10 political parties, thus decided to ditch the JI, a religious political party that made a strong comeback after the takeover by the interim administration. The JI leaders hope to stake its claim in the mainstream electoral space like never before. They realise that this is their only scope to garner more votes, as the next round of national elections will unlikely give them a similar opportunity. They strongly argued against allowing the Awami League to contest this election, unlike the BNP's position.

Having tasted sound victory in several university union elections held a few months ago, the JI now sees a prospect to consolidate its electoral presence at the national level. The Jamaat, a well-funded, strongly organised party, is heading a separate 11-party alliance, including the National Citizen Party (NCP), the new party, which certainly adds to the youth optics but is not likely to win many of the 32 seats it is contesting. The JI's slogan, 'Cholo Eksathe Gori Bangladesh' (Let's Build Bangladesh Together), has focused on a comparatively corruption-free image, but the lack of any women candidates and its very rigid positions related to women, which some of their alliance members have expressed, pose obvious limitations. Although some JI leaders have tried to tap into women voters through plans to establish daycare centres and breastfeeding corners in offices, there is a perception problem surrounding the JI among the largely middle-of-the-ground urban Bangladeshis. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of the seats are spread over urban locations. Though media polls have pointed to JI improving its voter strength, it still lacks mass appeal. Jamaat has fielded two Hindu candidates. But whether the minorities will take the bait remains a question. Coercion, of course, remains an available tool to many of the seasoned politicians, especially when it comes to minorities.

The past few months have also not covered the BNP in much glory, as reports of local extortions and bribes have come to light periodically. There is also disquiet in the party surrounding new leaders being favoured over long-time-serving ones. The leaders expelled from the party are contesting independently from as many as 72 constituencies.

The youth and first-time voters constitute nearly 35% of the electorate. Bangladeshi youths are very politically active, but, given the immediate history of the July-August 2024 movement and their aspiration for accountability and good governance, their electoral preferences are rather unknown.

The Jatiya Party has always, through its limited numbers, lent itself to the winning alliance. This time, a new alliance called the National Democratic Front (NDF) has been formed, which includes two factions of the Jatiya Party, with G M Qader leading a faction that remained outside this equation, making for more electoral uncertainty.

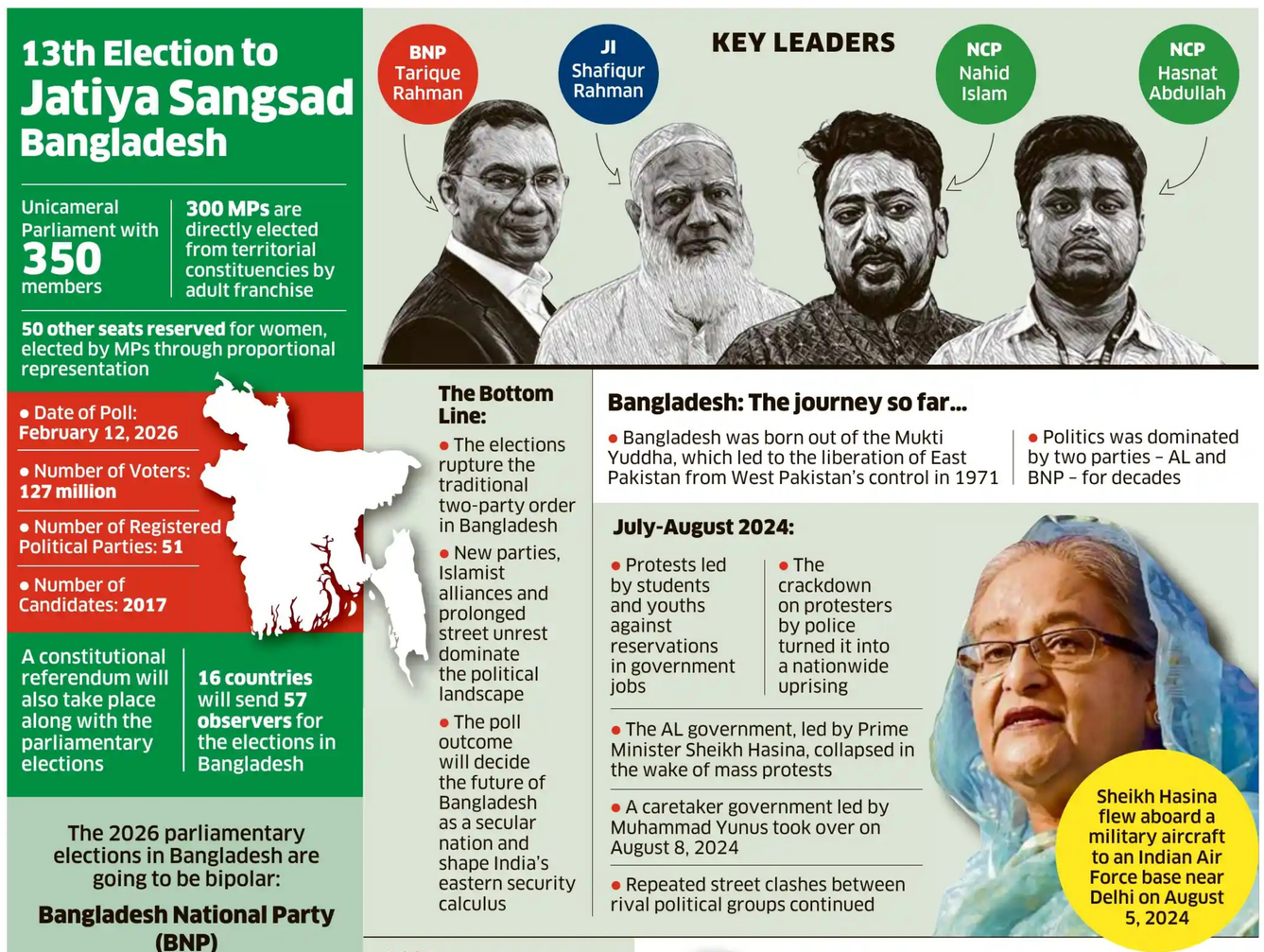
The interim government has, for the first time, introduced postal ballots for the four lakh overseas Bangladeshis. This time round, the individual voter will be casting their vote by ballot, not by voting machine.

This election will be rather transformational, not only domestically but also in terms of its impact on many of the international ties and partnerships that have emerged in recent times.

The India factor

For India, the choice in present-day Bangladesh is rather tricky. Indian memories of the last BNP rule, which caused heightened security concerns, remain. The JI is also known for its open anti-India position. But in recent months, many of the Bangladeshi politicians have voiced the need to engage with India. But the presence of elements who have been unhappy with the policies of New Delhi will need to be navigated adroitly by the elected government. The 15 years of Awami League's rule and the past 18 months have led to anti-India sentiments. Undeniably, India is not happy with the 'non-inclusive' elections that Bangladesh is holding. The banning of political activities of the AL by the interim administration did not endear Dhaka to Delhi, and the past month saw a further dip in bilateral ties. While the Indian external affairs minister's visit to attend Khaleda Zia's funeral was appreciated, he was the only leader who did not meet Muhammad Yunus, the head of the interim government. The controversy over cricket that followed soon further worsened the bilateral ties, but more telling was New Delhi's decision to allow former Awami League leaders to interact with journalists in India. One of the media events also had the former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, online. Hopefully, Delhi and Dhaka will find ways to reset their ties after the elections in Bangladesh.

(The writer is a professor at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O P Jindal Global University, Haryana)


13th Election to Jatiya Sangsad Bangladesh
Unicameral Parliament with 350 members
300 MPs are directly elected from territorial constituencies by adult franchise
50 other seats reserved for women, elected by MPs through proportional representation
• Date of Poll: February 12, 2026
• Number of Voters: 127 million
• Number of Registered Political Parties: 51
• Number of Candidates: 2017
A constitutional referendum will also take place along with the parliamentary elections
16 countries will send 57 observers for the elections in Bangladesh
The 2026 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh are going to be bipolar:
Bangladesh National Party (BNP)
versus
United Bangladesh, an 11-party alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and National Citizen Party (NCP)
The Awami League (AL), which won the last four polls, is suspended and not in the fray
KEY LEADERS
BNP Tarique Rahman
JI Shafiqur Rahman
NCP Nahid Islam
NCP Hasnat Abdullah
The Bottom Line:
• The elections rupture the traditional two-party order in Bangladesh
• New parties, Islamist alliances and prolonged street unrest dominate the political landscape
• The poll outcome will decide the future of Bangladesh as a secular nation and shape India's eastern security calculus
Bangladesh: The journey so far...
• Bangladesh was born out of the Mukti Yuddha, which led to the liberation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan's control in 1971
• Politics was dominated by two parties – AL and BNP – for decades
July-August 2024:
• Protests led by students and youths against reservations in government jobs
• The crackdown on protesters by police turned it into a nationwide uprising
• The AL government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, collapsed in the wake of mass protests
• A caretaker government led by Muhammad Yunus took over on August 8, 2024
• Repeated street clashes between rival political groups continued
Sheikh Hasina flew aboard a military aircraft to an Indian Air Force base near Delhi on August 5, 2024
2025:
• Widespread arrests, legal cases and asset seizures against AL leaders
• AL deregistered and barred from contesting elections
• Protest coordination committees evolved into political parties
• Rise of the NCP and other youth-driven platforms
Delhi-Dhaka Tension: The Flashpoints:
Unease in ties over the remarks on India's Northeast by Yunus and other politicians in Bangladesh
• Delhi remains silent over Dhaka's plea for Sheikh Hasina's extradition
• India is concerned about the persecution of Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh
• Delhi keeps watch on Bangladesh's growing ties with China
POLL OUTCOME: Implications for India
Scenarios:
1 BNP-led government: Cautious but functional ties
2 Islamist-influenced government: Heightened extremism risks, persecution of minorities, security risks
3 Contested or violent outcome: Regional instability

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Choked air hides a new danger

Polluted air in Delhi is a double whammy that supports antimicrobial-resistant bacteria that cause infection, writes Gangadharan B

The unhealthy air in Delhi hides another unseen threat. Researchers at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have mapped a "biological smog" that carries antibiotic-resistant bacteria—often referred to as "superbugs" and a part of the growing global crisis of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The study sampled air at four key locations: the Vasant Vihar urban slum in South West Delhi, Munirka market complex in South Delhi, Munirka Apartment in Dwarka Sector 9, South Delhi and a local sewage treatment plant within the JNU campus.

The findings show that at its peak, the load of a particular airborne bacteria strain, 'staphylococcus' reached 16,000 CFU/m³—sixteen times higher than 1,000 CFU/m³ — a level recommended by global health experts for microbial presence in the air, including all bacteria.

Out of the sampled airborne load, 20% were Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococci (MRS), 73% of which were resistant to drugs/antibiotics, including common antibiotics such as azithromycin and erythromycin.

Repeatedly exposed to antibiotics, the microbes evolve to survive them. The study suggests heavy antibiotic use during the COVID-19 pandemic may be a contributing factor.

However, Pune-based pulmonologist Dr Aparna Birajdar notes that antibiotic use in India requires regulation. "If there is repeated and unnecessary usage of antibiotics for wrong durations or wrong dosages, it will lead to mutation of AMR microbes," says Aparna. "These drug-resistant strains will then spread from person to person and in the environment, making them dominant."

According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) data, more than 3,00,000 lives have been lost in India annually since 1990 due to AMR. In India, an estimated 267,000 attributable deaths in 2021 were directly caused by antimicrobial resistance, while nearly 987,000 deaths were linked to AMR-related infections, according to IHME data estimates.

Poor air quality and AMR

Microbial contamination in the air could impact public health by increasing infections, says Dr Raksha K, Consultant Microbiologist and Infection Control Officer at Manipal Hospitals, Bengaluru. "Fine particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) and organic pollutants in the air create protective surfaces that help microbes spread more widely and survive longer," she adds.

While one could assume that the pollutants are mostly inorganic, carbon particles make up 20-45% of particulate matter in the air. And vehicular, industrial, and biomass-burning emissions contribute to this. "Any particle in the air can carry microbes if there is even a little bit of humidity," says Dr Maneesh Paul, a clinical microbiologist with an expertise in antimicrobial resistance (AMR). A thick haze is nothing but air filled with countless particles, each a potential vehicle for microbes to survive and travel.

The study confirms this. "The microbial load was very high during the winter season, both in indoor and outdoor settings," said Madhuri Singh, one of the researchers. "This could be because of the usual rise in Particulate Matter (PM) levels during winter." Cold air is denser and gets trapped under a layer of warmer air above. This prevents particulate matter from rising and dispersing, resulting in higher pollution levels during the winter.

A study published in *the International Society for Microbial Ecology* found that in "polluted" areas where the air quality index (AQI) was more than 100, the number of unique Antibiotic Resistance Genes (ARG) subtypes and their absolute abundance were significantly higher than in "clean" or "good" sites where the AQI was less than 50. In highly polluted air, there was a strong correlation between ARGs and integrons that facilitate the transfer of resistance genes between bacteria, thereby enabling horizontal gene transfer.

ARGs enter the atmosphere adsorbed on biological aerosols from anthropogenic sources such as sewage, hospitals, livestock farms and biomass burning. Experts say that it is important to act in accordance with the One Health Approach, a collaborative, multidisciplinary strategy that recognises the deep interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and environmental health.

Another intriguing aspect of the study is 'gene silencing'. Some bacteria carried genes for antibiotic resistance but did not actually behave as resistant in lab tests, responding to antibiotics. "This is critical because routine lab sensitivity tests, which check whether bacteria are killed or inhibited by an antibiotic, may not detect hidden resistance genes," Madhuri said. "Even if bacteria appear responsive in these tests, mutations can later activate those genes and make the bacteria fully resistant."

The microbes studied are known to cause skin, lung, urinary tract, bloodstream, and medical device-related infections. People with immunosuppressive conditions or undergoing immunosuppressive therapies, populations with chronic lung conditions, and age groups that may lack immunity are at high risk of infection with these bacteria and AMR.

Prevention methods

Mere presence of bacteria doesn't cause infection, but a concentration 16 times the safety limit is critical, says Maneesh. Experts report that physical barriers, such as wearing N95 masks, can protect people from microbes. Lifestyle changes that can enhance immunity may protect against AMR.

To ensure proper use of antibiotics in the judicial system, sensitivity testing is significant. "But, in primary healthcare setups and in clinics in small towns, there are neither facilities nor cost-bearing capacity for the patient to do the drug sensitivity testing," said Aparna. However, this requires regulation, experts noted.

Experts warn that antibiotic use must be controlled, and the sale of antibiotics over the counter must be avoided. Even improper disposal of antibiotics could increase AMR in the environment.

The precautionary principle requires that we treat urban air as a vector of resistance. "The failure to address this problem will cause the global health crisis of AMR, which already exists, to become more severe," Raksha said.

"Just like how pollution is monitored, there needs to be surveillance of AMR as well. While surveillance is carried out at clinical setups, surveillance of ambient AMR should also be strengthened," adds Madhuri. Experts and the State Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance (SAP–CAR) suggest sterilising the air when a particular locality is found to have a critical mass concentration of AMR.

(The author is a freelance journalist based in Bengaluru)

DID YOU KNOW?

The brain's cleanup may boost dementia

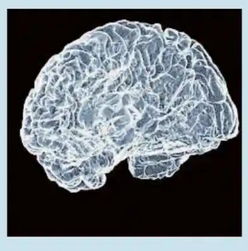
Microglia are the brain's immune cells that clean out debris, such as damaged proteins and old cell parts, to keep the organ healthy. But the very properties that make these cells so useful might also be a driving factor in Alzheimer's disease. According to a new study published in the journal *Nature*, microglia may inadvertently destroy vital brain connections as they struggle to clear backlogs of ageing proteins.

Neurodegenerative diseases affect around 1 in 12 people globally, and age is by far the most important risk factor. While much Alzheimer's research focuses on well-known markers like amyloid plaques (sticky protein clumps outside cells) and tau tangles (twisted fibres inside cells), scientists at Stanford University focused on the brain's system for making and disposing of proteins.

Tracking brain proteins

The researchers sought to understand what happens when this process fails, as it does in all ageing brains. They used healthy ageing mice and compared 4-month-old rodents with 24-month-old rodents to assess how proteostasis (the brain's system for maintaining and recycling proteins) deteriorates with ageing.

To observe what was happening inside these cells, they developed a new tool, BONCAT (Bioorthogonal Non-Canonical Amino Acid Tagging), which enabled them to tag and track newly synthesised proteins. This allowed them to follow the proteins from their synthesis to their eventual clearance.



The scientists discovered that as the brain ages, its ability to recycle proteins collapses. Proteins that used to be cleared out quickly now hang around for twice as long, as the team wrote in their study: "We observed that the half-life of neuronal proteins approximately doubles between young and aged mice, revealing a substantial loss of neuronal proteome maintenance with ageing."

This slowdown leads to more than 1,700 proteins clumping together, with the worst clogs occurring at synapses, where brain cells send and receive signals. As these proteins begin to accumulate, the microglia step in to clear the mess. "Synaptic proteins are highly enriched among those that slow down, aggregate, and ultimately accumulate in microglia, suggesting a cascade from impaired synaptic protein turnover to synapse engulfment."

The research findings suggest that when a neuron's recycling system fails, microglia try to clear the damaged proteins. However, because these proteins are inside the brain's communication hubs, they may end up destroying the hubs themselves.

"The number of age-impaired proteins that accumulate in microglia is significantly more than expected by random chance, indicating that microglia may selectively remove aberrant protein species from neurons to maintain proteostasis—but at the cost of synapse loss," the researchers explain.

If this is indeed a cause of dementia, the discovery could provide a new approach to treating it by designing therapeutics that restore this protein-recycling system in the brain.

-Phys.org

AI Mission 2.0 coming soon, says Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday announced that the Central government was planning to roll out the second edition of India's AI Mission soon.

"We will conclude the first phase of the AI Mission in another five to six months, after which we should move to AI Mission 2.0," he told reporters here. He added that stakeholder consultations for AI Mission 2.0 would begin soon, and that the new edition would feature significantly larger fiscal support.

In March 2024, the Cabinet approved the India AI Mission with a budgetary outlay of Rs 10,371.92 crore over five years to strengthen computing infrastructure, promote skilling, and develop indigenous AI models.

"Since its launch, we already have investments worth about $70 billion in the execution phase," he said. Emphasising India's focus on talent development, he noted that the country's IT industry was transitioning from traditional software services to AI-driven solutions.

UP police officers pressuring judges: HC

Court warns against Uttar Pradesh becoming 'police state'

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The Allahabad High Court on Friday said senior Uttar Pradesh police officers were "pressuring" judges, particularly chief judicial magistrates (CJMs), to pass "specific orders".

The observation was made by Justice Arun Kumar Deshwal in the presence of state police chief Rajeev Krishna and additional chief secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad during a hearing. "Look, we cannot allow Uttar Pradesh to become a police state," the court said.

The court was hearing a matter related to the rising trend of police shooting accused persons in the legs and the measures required to prevent such incidents. The two officials appeared before the court via video conferencing.

Justice Deshwal said the law was not being followed in every district and that he had not found a single case where the law or the directives of the Supreme Court had been complied with. He observed that such lapses at times led to disputes between district police chiefs and judicial officers. He added that he had transferred a CJM in the past to prevent such a dispute.

Justice Deshwal said he had received feedback from district judges that police officers, especially newly appointed IPS officers, often began pressuring judicial officers. He also said Bar Association leaders had informed him that senior police officers sometimes entered courtrooms and exerted "pressure" on judicial officers. "The authority to punish rests with the judiciary, not the police," he added.

Krishna assured the court that necessary instructions would be issued to prevent such practices.

8 cybercriminals arrested in Jharkhand

DEOGHAR, PTI: Police arrested eight cybercriminals during a raid and seized 14 mobile phones in Jharkhand's Deoghar district.

The raid was conducted in Lusiyo hill area on Thursday, following a tip-off that a group was luring people over phone calls by posing as customer care executives, bank officials and government officers. Police said the scammers were defrauding PhonePe users and PM Kisan beneficiaries.

FESTIVE SPIRIT

People take a holy dip at Sangam during the ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday. PTI

Stem cell therapy for autism unethical: SC

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Friday said every use of stem cells in patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) outside an approved clinical trial is unethical and would amount to malpractice.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said a medical practitioner cannot be said to meet the standard of reasonable care if an intervention is administered without credible scientific evidence of safety and efficacy, or where authoritative medical bodies have unequivocally stated that such treatment is not recommended.

The court found that the legal framework governing stem cell research was "fragmented" and scattered across multiple laws, making compliance and enforcement difficult. It said this lack of clarity enabled errant practitioners to exploit vulnerable patients. "Such obscurity, whether conscious or unintended, has arisen directly from legislative short-sightedness," the bench said.

The court urged the government to consolidate and clarify the law at the earliest and to create a dedicated authority for nationwide regulatory oversight of stem cell research.

HC questions DGCA over relaxation of norms for airlines

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Delhi High Court on Friday questioned the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on the "indefinite" relaxation given to airlines with respect to the implementation of new norms on weekly rest and leaves for pilots.

Issuing notice on a public interest litigation on the issue, a bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia asked the aviation regulator to explain the "rationale" behind its decision to immediately withdraw the new flight-duty norm, which said that "no leave shall be substituted by weekly rest".

The bench asked the DGCA as well as IndiGo to file their response in two weeks. On December 5, 2025, DGCA rolled out the exemption to Flight Duty Time Limitations to enable IndiGo to have more pilots on duty to reduce the disruptions. IndiGo cancelled hundreds of flights across the country in the first week of December last year as the airline was not prepared to implement the new flight-duty norms for pilots.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

ALEXA, WHAT'S THE WEATHER OUTSIDE?
SORRY, I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE BUSY RIGHT NOW?
I'M CURRENTLY PROCESSING 17 OTHER REQUESTS
CAN'T YOU JUST ASK SIRI?
DON'T GET ME INVOLVED...I'M BUSY TOO!
OK, THIS IS ALL GOING TOO FAR

Hagar The Horrible

LARS IS SICK!
THAT'S NOT GOOD! HE'LL MISS OUR UPCOMING ATTACK ON THE CYCLOPS GIANTS!
WOULD YOU LEND ME TWO SILVER COINS?
FOR A GET-WELL CARD?
NO, LARS IS CHARGING TWO SILVER COINS TO BLOW HIS GERMS IN MY FACE!

Beetle Bailey

WHAT SAY WE GO QUAFF A FEW BEERS?
HOW DO YOU "QUAFF"?
YOU DRINK HEARTILY!
LIKE POURING IT DOWN YOUR GULLET WITHOUT SWALLOWING LIKE YOU USUALLY DO

Peanuts

I JUST SAW SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO HAVE FOR SCHOOL...A FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR LUNCH BOX!
FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS?!
THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY TO PAY FOR A LUNCH BOX
BUT WOULDN'T THE SANDWICHES TASTE GREAT?

Marvin

I'M GOING TO GO GIVE OUR NEW NEIGHBORS A BATCH OF MY COOKIES AS A HOUSEWARMING GIFT
SLAM!
I HATE THE NEW NEIGHBORS! THEY DON'T EAT SWEETS!

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

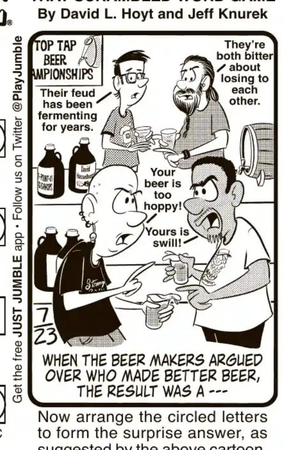
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

THCHA

YWLBA

AARDIF

RASUEQ


TOP TAP BEER CHAMPIONSHIPS
They're both bitter about losing to each other.
Their feud has been fermenting for years.
Your beer is too hoppy!
Yours is swill!
7/23
WHEN THE BEER MAKERS ARGUED OVER WHO MADE BETTER BEER, THE RESULT WAS A ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: ( ) - ( ) (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: TASTY FETCH ORIGIN MOMENT
Answer: The shoe store went out of business because not enough people — SET FOOT IN IT

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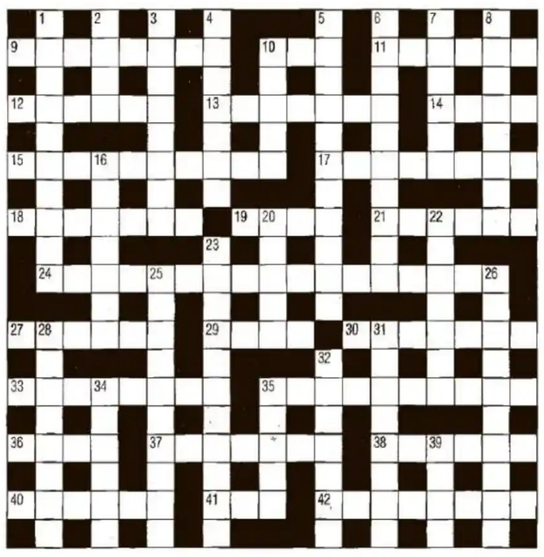
CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 4025



ACROSS
9 Dilemma (8)
10 Zodiac sign (3)
11 Dental deposit (6)
12 Agree (6)
13 Japanese warrior (7)
14 Dry (4)
15 Composure (10)
17 Hostile (8)
18 Balance disorder (7)
19 Notion (4)
21 Agreement (6)
24 Forgo retaliation (4,3,5,5)
27 Male goose (6)
29 Challenge (4)
30 Greedy person (7)
33 Padre (8)
35 Low-calorie food item (10)
36 Of the mouth (4)
37 Ailment (7)
38 Arrive (4,2)
40 Regard highly (6)
41 Immerse (3)
42 Lineage (8)

DOWN
1 Succeeding (10)
2 Leg joint (4)
3 Old coin (8)
4 Girl's school dress (7)
5 Map reference (11)
6 Hopeful (10)
7 Seasoned sausage (6)
8 Exultant (8)
10 Not smooth (5)
16 Dressed (7)
20 Dissuade (5)
22 Voter (7)
23 Principal actress (7,4)
25 Dry land (5,5)
26 Laughing jackass (10)
28 Witty remark (8)
31 Cosmetic item (8)
32 Relative (7)
34 Young hen (6)
35 Inexpensive (5)
39 Baby's biscuit (4)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
9 Some came round to give a hand – honestly (2,4,2)
10 The gentleman father cut short (3)
11 A signal to abandon (6)
12 She's a no-good, knocking back drink (6)
13 Silence on the radio or the funeral march? (4,3)
14 The climbing plant, as one guessed, did cover it (4)
15 Be under the false impression, being immature, personally (3,7)
17 Get moving to ensure you're prepared for an attack (8)
18 A group of spectators carrying it does prove disturbing (7)
19 Undecided, to be frank (4)
21 Bring love into it, which is tedious (6)
24 Sounding low and feeling thoroughly miserable (8,3,6)
27 An iron and a wood I myself am carrying (6)
29 Very funny way of conveying your disdain to an actor (4)
30 Do exercises for a while (7)
33 Regarding careers, you share the same concern with him (2-6)
35 It's to do with showing regard for others (10)
36 Mount you put a bet on, when backing (4)
37 Announce that you're not running? (7)
38 Go on, chum! It's of very little importance (6)
40 Act in accordance with and you'll succeed (6)
41 Taking about a quarter the time to dispose of (3)
42 A lack of cars, usually, approaching a built-up area (8)

DOWN
1 Gathering one's adding a few for convenience sake (8,2)
2 It's good form, you say, pet (4)
3 It's clear father came back by himself (8)
4 Hearing the sound of gongs, pokes one's nose in (7)
5 Not judgmental about Americans thinking only of women? (5-6)
6 Unable to be examined by the surgeon? That's unlikely (10)
7 Nonsense! Hit the ball to one side (6)
8 Resumptions of the occurrences (6-2)
10 The stick they'll get if they don't work? (5)
16 Be faster than the others when there's a sudden exodus (7)
20 The yard got a tip off that came to nothing (5)
22 Go back and haggle some more with (7)
23 Certain to pour tea into – it's only to be expected (2,9)
25 Goes to pieces when the car stalls? (6,4)
26 Taking little time to grade as poor (6-4)
28 Taking on, or making a fuss, over the lost point (8)
31 Pan it dreadfully when he's appearing in it as an actor (8)
32 Vilify, at a press gathering, the English (7)
34 By word of mouth, when you gather round beforehand (6)
35 Say it's awful meat (5)
39 Lap speed (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12343

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, St-a-ir 6, Couch 9, Rule out 10, B-room 11, Stand 12, Ditto 13, Mini-mum 15, Peg 17, Epic 18, Grille 19, D-avid 20, T-Rowel 22, Star 24, Sin 25, We-L-come 26, Sides 27, Mimi-c 28, Gutsy 29, Gin-G-ham 30, Agent 31, Spuds
DOWN: 2, Turn-I-p 3, I-R-on-ic 4, Rum 5, D-E-nim 6, C-us-t-ard 7, Otto 8, C-ancel 12, Du-Cal 13, Me-Lts 14, Ninon 15, Pluto 16, Genre 18, GI-Les 19, Deficit 21, Riding 22, Sc-rump 23, AM-used 25, Wedge 26, Sign 28, Gas

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Crisp 6, Épées 9, Tenable 10, Actor 11, Aspen 12, First 13, Breezes 15, Met 17, Eddy 18, Vicuña 19, Aspic 20, Occult 22, Here 24, Pat 25, Decider 26, Begun 27, Kebab 28, Adder 29, Procure 30, Balsa 31, Crate
DOWN: 2, Record 3, Storey 4, Per 5, Saris 6, Elastic 7, Pest 8, Eleven 12, Feast 13, Bebop 14, Edict 15, Muted 16, Taper 18, Vixen 19, Algebra 21, Camera 22, Hinder 23, Repent 25, Dunce 26, Baps 28, Arc

◆SU-DO-KU-6818◆

		9						3
5	6		2		4		7	
1		7	8	3			2	
9						8		
	3			5			9	
		2						7
	8			2	5	7		6
	9		7		3		8	4
2						9		

easy

SOLUTION TO 6817

1	2	6	8	3	4	9	7	5
5	9	3	7	6	1	2	8	4
7	8	4	2	9	5	3	1	6
2	6	9	1	5	7	4	3	8
4	1	7	3	8	6	5	2	9
3	5	8	4	2	9	7	6	1
6	4	1	9	7	3	8	5	2
8	3	5	6	4	2	1	9	7
9	7	2	5	1	8	6	4	3

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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D2	N1	A1	A1	E1	B3	K5	Triple Word Score	RACK 1
E1	I1	C3	C3	R1	V4	E1	Triple Word Score	RACK 2
E1	C3	I1	I1	O1	B3	D2	Triple Word Score	RACK 3
S1	N1	H4	F4	A1	O1	I1	Triple Word Score	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 200-210
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

A1	S1	H4	E1	N1		RACK 1	= 16
B3	R1	O1	T1	H4		RACK 2	= 10
C3	O1	L1	O1	G2	N1	E1	RACK 3	= 80
C3	L1	I1	M3	A1	T1	E1	RACK 4	= 64

PAR SCORE 110-120 JUDD'S TOTAL 170

HITORI-3272

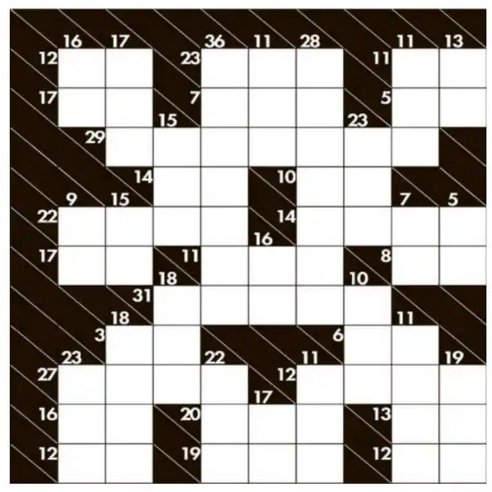
3	6	2	5	7	3	3	3
1	7	5	6	3	2	4	3
2	1	8	7	4	7	5	7
7	7	5	3	3	4	3	6
5	4	3	2	8	6	7	1
7	8	7	1	7	5	7	2
1	3	4	3	5	7	2	8
4	2	6	7	1	8	7	5

SOLUTION TO 3271

5	4	3	2	■	6	■	1
■	2	■	7	5	1	4	3
3	8	4	■	2	■	1	5
1	■	8	3	■	7	5	■
■	5	6	■	1	■	8	7
4	■	2	1	8	3	■	6
2	3	1	5	6	■	7	■
8	■	7	■	4	5	3	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3272



SOLUTION TO 3271

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3813

9						1		3
	■		3			2	7	9
	8	■	1			■		6
	6		■		■			
		2		■				4
	1		■	7	4			
		■				■		1
	2			3			■	
■							5	2

SOLUTION TO 3812

6	3	4	7	8	2	5	9	1
2	8	9	1	5	4	6	3	7
5	1	7	6	3	9	2	4	8
9	7	1	2	6	5	3	8	4
3	5	8	4	9	7	1	2	6
4	6	2	8	1	3	7	5	9
1	9	6	5	2	8	4	7	3
8	4	5	3	7	6	9	1	2
7	2	3	9	4	1	8	6	5

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Economic Survey boost for Kerala govt amid poverty row

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

In a boost to the Left Democratic Front, the Economic Survey released by the Centre on Thursday hailed Kerala's poverty eradication model. This comes even as the BJP leadership in the state and the Congress have accused the CPM government of making false claims on poverty eradication.

The Left Front has been projecting the scheme as a major achievement of the Pinarayi Vijayan government. Kerala was declared an extreme-poverty-free state last November, with the government claiming that 1.03 lakh people from 64,006 families had been lifted out of extreme poverty.

The Economic Survey hailed Kerala's poverty eradication model, along with Bihar's Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana.

"Both SJY and the Kerala model showcase the involvement of the community and a multipronged strategy with continuous support and monitoring to 'push' the vulnerable out of the vicious cycle through handholding support, training, access to finance, and basic necessities. These interventions enable households to become self-reliant and resilient even in times of crisis," the Economic Survey said.

Kerala: SIT records actor's statement in Sabarimala case

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: The special investigation team probing the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold heist has recorded the statement of actor Jayaram in connection with his association with the key accused Bengaluru-based Keralite Unnikrishnan Potti.

According to sources, members of the SIT called on Jayaram at his residence in Chennai the other day and took his statements. He may be made a witness in the case.

Videos of Unnikrishnan Potti carrying parts of gold-plated door frames of the Sabarimala temple to the actor's house in Chennai, and the actor later addressing a press conference stating that he was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to participate in the pooja of the gold-plated articles being taken to the Ayyappa temple, had earlier come out.

The actor had admitted that he was associated with Potti as a genuine Sabarimala pilgrim only, and he was unaware of any dubious activities of Potti.

Raj man held on charges of spying for Pakistan

JAIPUR, PTI: Rajasthan Police has arrested a 28-year-old man from the border district of Jaisalmer on charges of spying for Pakistan's intelligence agency, officials said on Friday.

The accused was found to be allegedly involved in anti-national activities and sharing strategically sensitive and confidential information related to the Indian Army across the border, they said.

Additional Director General (Police Intelligence) Prafull Kumar said, during surveillance, inputs were received about suspicious activities of Jhabraram, a resident of the Nedan village.

Technical analysis revealed that the accused was in constant contact with Pakistani handlers through social media, Kumar said.

The police detained him for questioning. Examination of his mobile phone and technical evidence showed that he had been lured through a honeytrap and financial inducements by Pakistani agencies, following which he started sharing sensitive information related to the Indian Army, the ADG said.

Vote for BJP again to identify infiltrators: Shah in Assam

Union home minister repeats assurance twice in the same day

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a public meeting in Dibrugarh on Friday. PTI

POLL PROMISES

- Shah unveils development projects worth Rs 1,715 crore in Assam
- Says trade agreement with the Eurpean Union will help export Assam tea with zero tariff
- Promises to conduct a special recruitment drive in CRPF for Assam's Mising community
- Says will identify infiltrators who entered the state during the Congress rule and posed demographic threats

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday urged voters in poll-bound Assam to re-elect the BJP for a third straight term to allow the saffron party to "identify the infiltrators from Bangladesh one by one" — an assurance that dominated the ruling party's pre-poll promise since 2014 and even before.

"In the past 10 years in power, the BJP government has stopped infiltration. But we will identify those who already entered during the Congress rule and posed demographic threats. Elect the BJP government for the third term. Let me assure you today that we will not spare those who have settled. We will identify them one by one and expel them," said Shah twice—first in Dibrugarh in eastern Assam and hours later in Dhemaji in North Assam.

He laid the foundation for the second Assembly building in Dibrugarh, and addressed the 10th Missing Youth Festival of the Mising community — one of the major tribes — in Dhemaji.

"For decades, the Congress allowed infiltration into Assam and used them as a vote bank to stay in power. But today, our government has freed 1.26 lakh hectares of forest and government land from the Bangladeshi infiltrators," said Shah, referring to the ongoing eviction drives targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims, whom the BJP considers "infiltrators".

"The infiltrators did not spare the land in the birthplace of Srimanta Sankardev, Kaziranga National Park, and even targeted and killed our rhinos. The demographic threat must be stopped. Otherwise, Assam will face a lot of difficulties in the days ahead," he said in Dibrugarh.

In Dhemaji, Shah said "infiltrators" had become dominant in six districts: Dhubri, Goalpara, Darrang, Bongaigaon, Morigaon, and Barpeta.

"They were negligible in these districts, but now they have become the majority. You don't have to take up arms and guard the borders. The Himanta Biswa Sarma government will do so. Just vote for the BJP again," he said.

The issue of "foreigners" dominates politics in Assam, and gains further prominence in the run-up to elections.

During campaigns for elections since 2014, when the Narendra Modi government came to power, the BJP has been making the same promise of identifying and removing "infiltrators" from Assam.

Opposition parties have often slammed the move, saying the BJP failed to fulfil its promise despite being in power for 10 years in Assam and about 12 years at the Centre.

BJP resorting to 'vote chori' fearing defeat: Assam Oppn

GUWAHATI, DHNS: The Congress-led Opposition alliance in poll-bound Assam on Friday alleged that the ruling BJP, on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's instructions, was resorting to "vote chori" (vote theft) via electoral-roll revision because it was "staring at sure defeat" in the March-April Assembly polls.

The Opposition parties staged a massive protest in Guwahati on the day Union Home Minister Amit Shah attacked the Congress in two public meetings—in East Assam's Dibrugarh and North Assam's Dhemaji. Shah accused the Congress of failing to end conflict in Assam, stop infiltration, protect ethnic communities' culture, and ensure development despite being in power for decades.

SEEING RED OVER SAFFRON

- Assam Cong chief Gaurav Gogoi says CM Himanta Biswa Sarma will go to jail the day the BJP loses power
- Claims CM is trying to snatch people's voting rights by destroying democratic values and misusing the EC

The allegations

"The Sarma government's fall is now inevitable. The day the BJP government is removed from power, he will have to go to jail," said Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi while leading a protest march on Friday.

Gaurav Gogoi during the protest march in Guwahati on Friday.

"Sarma is trying to snatch people's voting rights by destroying democratic values and misusing the Election Commission. He is desperate to return to power only to expand his family's wealth and hand over the lands of the Bodo, Rabha, and Karbi communities to corporate houses like Adani and Ambani, which is why vote chori is being carried out," he added.

Gogoi said, "The Opposition has united against 'vote chori'. Seeing our unity, the people have gained courage. People are now saying they are not afraid of Sarma... In a democratic country, no one is more powerful than the people. The people of Assam will teach Sarma this lesson in the coming days."

CID begins probe into Baramati plane crash

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) has started the investigations into the plane crash that claimed the lives of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and others, even as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) are probing the incident.

In case of the death of an influential public representative or figure in an accident, the probe is conducted by the State CID. The Baramati taluka police station has registered an accidental death report (ADR) into the January 28 crash that claimed five lives.

Besides Pawar, others who died were Captain Sumit Kapur, the Pilot-in-Command (PIC), Captain Sambhavi Pathak, the Second-in-Command (SIC), Pinky Mali, the Flight Attendant, and Vidhit Jadhav, a Mumbai Police Constable, who was the Personal Security Officer of the Deputy CM.

The ADR has been transferred to the Pune-headquartered State CID. It will meet officers of the Pune Rural Police, seek details from the DGCA and AAIB, besides visiting the crash site, which remains secured.

It may be mentioned that the Ministry of Civil Aviation has confirmed that the Black Box on board the plane has been recovered from the crash site. The details of the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder will be analysed.

Tirumala laddu case: Row over CBI chargesheet

YSRCP corners Naidu on claims of animal fat in ghee

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

The CBI-led special investigation team (SIT)'s final chargesheet on the alleged adulteration of cow ghee used in Tirumala's revered laddu prasadam has ignited a fierce political storm in Andhra Pradesh.

The ruling TDP and the BJP argued that the SIT did not give the YSRCP regime a clean chit. However, the YSRCP hailed the findings, noting the probe found no use of animal fats in the prasadam during the 2019-2024 period. The SIT probe exposed it as a "vegetable oil" fraud, with lab reports indicating rare traces of animal fats, it said.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Chairman B R Naidu said the SIT chargesheet clearly established the use of adulterated ghee in the preparation of Srivari Laddus, and warned of strict action against those responsible for tarnishing the TTD's image.

Talking to reporters at Sri Padmavathi Rest House in Tirupati on Friday evening, he said it was untrue that no ghee adulteration had taken place, as the SIT charge sheet itself recorded clear violations.

He pointed out that serious irregularities occurred during the ghee procurement tender process, and alleged that tender conditions were deliberately modified to benefit a few individuals. Contracts were awarded to firms lacking the required capacity and infrastructure, he said.

Some chemicals allegedly used in ghee-manufacturing were extremely hazardous, he added, noting that nearly 20 crore laddus were prepared using adulterated ghee.

The YSRCP demanded that Chief Minister and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu should be pulled up for his remarks on the issue.

The party's state coordinator Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy told reporters on Friday that Naidu tried to politicise the issue with an irresponsible comment. The SIT report stated that there is no animal fat in the laddu, based on reports from two national laboratories, and Naidu should be questioned for passing remarks that hurt the sentiments of devotees across the globe, he said.

The SIT report stated that there is no animal fat in the laddu, based on reports from two national laboratories, and Naidu should be questioned for passing remarks that hurt the sentiments of devotees across the globe, he said.

BJP slams Cong over Ansari's 'Indian lootera' remark on Ghazni

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The BJP on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Congress over remarks attributed to former vice-president Hamid Ansari, in which he categorised medieval rulers — including Mahmud of Ghazni — as Indians rather than foreign invaders.

Reacting to Ansari's remarks, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the comment was "sick", and questioned the Congress leadership's silence on the issue. He asked, "Does Rahul Gandhi agree with this statement?"

Trivedi said such remarks raised serious questions about the Congress' understanding of history and its ideological position.

In a video clip shared on social media this week, Ansari was heard saying during an interview, "I have always said that the people we portray as foreign invaders in our history books..., they were all Indian 'looteras'... They didn't come from outside."

He was referring to figures such as Mahmud of Ghazni and members of the Lodhi dynasty.

Responding to the remarks, the BJP accused the Congress and its ecosystem of attempting to "whitewash" episodes of medieval invasions.

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said on X that the Opposition party had repeatedly seen narratives that downplayed historical atrocities.

BJP stresses justice for all after SC stay on UGC rules

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Reacting to the Supreme Court's stay on the University Grants Commission's (UGC) equity regulations, the BJP on Friday said the government is committed to ensuring justice for all sections of society.

Addressing the issue at a press briefing, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said that the government is committed to justice for all. "Since the matter is sub judice in the Supreme Court and the court has issued a stay order, it is not appropriate to comment on it."

Trivedi added that the party's position remains unchanged.

"One thing is very clear: it is the party's view that we will not allow injustice to be done to anyone. Our government is committed to ensuring justice for all," he said.

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the UGC regulations aimed at preventing caste-based discrimination in higher educational institutions, observing that the framework appeared prima facie vague and could have sweeping consequences.

On Thursday, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi observed that the regulations suffer from "certain ambiguities" and that "the possibility of their misuse cannot be ruled out".

Protests against the rules had broken out across the country, with savarna "general" caste groups opposing the rules.

The rules were mandated by a Supreme Court ruling in a case filed by the mothers of Payal Tadvi and Rohith Vemula, both students who died by suicide after facing discrimination on campus.

NATION REMEMBERS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat on the occasion of Martyrs' Day, observed to mark the death anniversary of the father of the nation, in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

Cong, DMK will begin talks on seat-sharing soon: TNCC chief

CHENNAI, PTI: Denying any rift in the Congress-DMK ties, TNCC chief K Selvaperunthagai on Friday said the two parties will begin the seat-sharing negotiations in a week.

Selvaperunthagai exuded confidence that his party would get the expected number of seats during the talks with the DMK.

Meanwhile, DMK deputy general secretary Kanimozhi, who met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi earlier this week in Delhi, told reporters on Friday in Thoothukudi that the initial, informal talks between the two parties have been "smooth."

Party president M K Stalin would make an announcement on seats to be shared following the conclusion of talks, she said.

"We are not exerting pressure on our ally. We will ask and get what we want, and the DMK will give (us)," Selvaperunthagai told reporters in Tiruvallur.

On Kanimozhi's meeting with Rahul Gandhi, recently, the TNCC chief said, "We are holding talks to commence negotiations on seat sharing; seat sharing parleys will begin in about a week."

Tharoor hails Rahul, quashes Congress exit talk

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: A day after meeting the AICC leadership, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor visited the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram and reaffirmed his loyalty to the party and support for Rahul Gandhi.

Shashi Tharoor

While Tharoor said that he had no plans to leave the Congress, legislature party leader VD Satheesan said Tharoor remained an important figure in the party and would actively participate in the campaign across Kerala for the upcoming Assembly elections.

"I am not going anywhere. It was the media that gave such reports. On key international issues, I prefer to speak about the nation rather than politics. I never spoke against Rahul Gandhi. Rahul is a very sincere person. He raises his voice strongly on many issues like communalism," Tharoor told reporters.

Tharoor turned up at the Kerala PCC headquarters to attend the Martyrs' Day observance.

Tharoor was reportedly upset after being sidelined by Rahul during a recent event in Kochi.

On Thursday, Tharoor met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul, where he reportedly shared his grievances and received a positive response from the leadership.

Oppn, activists decry 'ministerial veto' plan for RTI queries

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Economic Survey's prescription for a "re-examination" of the Right to Information (RTI) Act by exploring the possibility of a "ministerial veto" to withhold information and exempt confidential reports and draft comments from disclosures has attracted criticism from the Congress and transparency activists.

They insisted that there was "no evidence" to suggest that officers were restricted because of the existing law.

The survey said the Act was "never intended as a tool for idle curiosity, nor as a mechanism to micro-manage the government from the outside". It warned that the existing transparency regime "may hold back" officials from expressing their views freely.

RTI RELOOK?

- Economic Survey calls for a 're-examination' of the RTI Act as it apparently constrains officers
- Suggests a 'ministerial veto' to withhold information, besides exempting certain reports and comments from disclosure
- Congress, activists say there is 'no evidence' to suggest that the existing law restricts officers

Tabled in Parliament on Thursday, the survey quoted the restrictions provided in the transparency laws in Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom to argue for similar provisions in the RTI Act.

It suggested exemptions for "brainstorming notes, working papers, and draft comments until they form part of the final record of decision-making", protecting service records, transfers, and confidential staff reports from casual requests, and a "narrowly defined ministerial veto, subject to parliamentary oversight, to guard against disclosures that could unduly constrain governance".

The objections

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge posted on X, "Modi government has systematically weakened the RTI Act...After killing MGNREGA, is it RTI's turn to get murdered? [sic]"

Anjali Bhardwaj, associated with the Satark Nagrik Sangathan and the National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information, debunked claims of constraints faced by officers, saying the survey made the claims without proof.

Ban beef exports, prove you are Hindu: Seer to Yogi

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

In an escalating row over the Magh Mela at Prayagraj, prominent Hindu seer Swami Avimukteshwarananda on Friday declared open war on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, daring him to prove that he was a Hindu.

This comes days after the seer left the annual ritual on the banks of the Ganga in protest against the authorities' refusal to allow him to proceed to the 'sangam' in his chariot for the holy dip on Mauni Amavasya.

"One does not become a Hindu merely by wearing saffron outfits and delivering speeches. The first step in Hinduism is 'go seva' (serving cows) and 'dharma raksha' (protecting the religion)," Avimukteshwarananda told reporters in Varanasi.

UP accounts for 40% of India's total beef exports. Will the dream of establishing Ram Rajya be achieved through foreign exchange earned by exporting beef, he asked.

"Export of bovine meat should be completely banned in Uttar Pradesh. The cow should be declared Rajyamata. You (Adityanath) have 40 days to do so. If you fail, it will be presumed that you are a fake Hindu," the seer said.

He also claimed that exported meat was officially categorised as buffalo meat though it contained cow meat.

He added that he would convene a meeting of saints and seers in Lucknow in March to discuss the matter. "If the government fails to issue an order banning beef exports, we will be forced to declare Adityanath a nakli (fake) Hindu," he said.

UN chief underlines need for 'multi-polarity', cites India-EU trade deal

Emphasises global problems will not be solved by one power calling the shots

UNITED NATIONS, PTI

UN chief Antonio Guterres cited the FTA between India and the EU as he underlined the need to support "multi-polarity", emphasising that global problems will not be solved by "one power calling the shots", in a veiled reference to the US and China.

"In the present moment, it is clear that the most powerful country in the world is the US. Obviously, we see - and many see in relation to the future - the idea that there are two poles, one centred in the US and one centred in China," Guterres said Thursday at a press conference here outlining his priorities for 2026.

He added that "if we want a stable world, if we want a world in which peace can be sustained, in which development can be generalised, and in which, in the end, our values will prevail, we need to support multi-polarity.

"We need to support a dense set of relations among different countries. And I see with a lot of positive expectations, recent trade agreements: You had the EU with Mercosur. You had EU with Indonesia. EU with India," Secretary General Guterres said. "You had Canada with China. You had UK with China. So, it is this network in trade, this network in technology, this network in international cooperation among a progressively larger group of countries and entities in a true multipolar world that, in my opinion, can create the conditions for strong multilateral institutions and for a world in which the values that are the values of the Charter of United Nations can prevail," Guterres said.

India and the European Union on Tuesday sealed a landmark free trade agreement-- billed as the "mother of all deals" -- to create a market of two billion people, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Antonio Costa unveiling a transformative five-year agenda to largely leverage trade and defence in protecting the rules-based world order.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with European Council President Antonio Costa (L), and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. PTI FILE

UN faces 'financial collapse'

The UN chief has told states that the organisation is at risk of "imminent financial collapse", citing unpaid fees and a budget rule that forces the global body to return unspent money, according to a letter seen by Reuters on Friday.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

US President Donald Trump and his wife Melania arrive for the premiere of the documentary film "Melania" at the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, on Thursday. REUTERS

US to return three ancient bronze sculptures to India

▸ The US will return three ancient bronze sculptures to India that were illegally removed from the country's temples, reports PTI from New York.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in Washington DC said Wednesday that three sculptures will be returned to the Government of India, following "rigorous provenance research" that documented the sculptures had been removed illegally from temple settings.

A statement issued by the museum said that the Indian government has agreed to place one of the sculptures on long-term loan, an arrangement that will allow the museum to publicly share the full story of the object's origins, removal and return, and to underscore the museum's commitment to provenance research.

The sculptures are 'Shiva Nataraja' belonging to the Chola period, circa 990; 'Somaskanda' of the Chola period, 12th century; and 'Saint Sundarar with Paravai' of the Vijayanagar period, 16th century.

The sculptures "exemplify the rich artistry of South Indian bronze casting" and were originally sacred objects traditionally carried in temple processions.

New batch of Epstein files released

▸ The US Justice Department announced Friday it was releasing millions of new pages from the Jeffrey Epstein files along with photos and videos, adding fuel to a political drama that has put pressure on President Donald Trump, AFP reports from Washington.

Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said more than three million pages of documents related to the convicted sex offender were being published on a department website, along with 180,000 images and 2,000 videos. "Today's release marks the end of a very comprehensive document identification and review process to ensure transparency to the American people," Blanche said

Dutch govt mulls 'freedom tax'

▸ The incoming Dutch government plans to add a surcharge to income and corporate taxes to generate around 5 billion euros ($6 billion) per year for increased defence spending, coalition parties said on Friday, reports Reuters from Amsterdam.

To meet a target set by NATO countries last year, the government aims to increase defence spending to 2.8% of gross domestic product by 2030 and to 3.5% by 2035, compared with around 2% now.

Ultimately, the increase in defence spending would be around 19 billion euros per year, which would be funded by broad budget cuts, including in healthcare and welfare, as well as the tax increment the government has named a freedom tax.

In its coalition agreement presented on Friday, months after the October election, the new government also said it planned to invest in housing, while limiting the government deficit to around 2% of GDP.

Participants wearing isothermal wetsuits float among ice floes in a hole on the frozen Moskva river as they enjoy ice floating - the growing relaxation trend, in Moscow on Friday. AFP

Rafah crossing to partially reopen

▸ Israel announced it would reopen the crucial Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt on Sunday after months of urging from the UN, humanitarian organisations and ordinary Palestinians -- but only for the "limited movement of people", reports AFP from Jerusalem.

Earlier on Friday, the Islamist movement Hamas had called for the "immediate transition to the second phase" of the ongoing US-brokered truce in Gaza, namely its provision for the reopening of Rafah, as well as the entry of a technocratic Palestinian committee to administer the territory.

Israel had previously expressed its unwillingness to reopen the gateway until getting back the remains of Ran Gvili, the last hostage to be held in Gaza, who was recovered earlier this week and laid to rest in Israel on Wednesday.

"The Rafah Crossing will open this coming Sunday in both directions, for limited movement of people only," COGAT, an Israeli defence ministry body overseeing civil affairs in occupied Palestinian territories, said.

Venezuela's acting prez dials Modi, discusses ties

NEW DELHI, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez on Friday and the two leaders agreed to take the bilateral relations to new heights in the years ahead.

The phone call between Rodriguez and Modi was the first since the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife by the United States.

"Spoke with Acting President of Venezuela, Ms. Delcy Rodriguez," the prime minister said in a post on X.

Bilateral partnership

"We agreed to further deepen and expand our bilateral partnership in all areas, with a shared vision of taking India-Venezuela relations to new heights in the years ahead," he added.

Rodriguez took over as the interim president of Venezuela on January 5, two days after US forces seized her predecessor, Maduro, to face trial in New York.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the two leaders agreed to further expand and deepen the India-Venezuela partnership in all areas, including trade and investment, energy, digital technology, health, agriculture and people-to-people ties.

They exchanged views on various regional and global issues of mutual interest, and underscored the importance of their close cooperation for the Global South, the statement said.

Venezuela airspace to reopen

President Donald Trump said he had ordered commercial airspace over Venezuela to be reopened, nearly four weeks after the US military operation to topple Nicolas Maduro, reports AFP.
Trump told a cabinet meeting he had just spoken to Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodriguez "and informed her that we're going to be opening up all commercial airspace over Venezuela."

US Prez picks Kevin Warsh as new Federal Reserve chair

Hopes Warsh will follow his roadmap toward much lower interest rates

WASHINGTON, AFP

US President Donald Trump announced on Friday that he is nominating Kevin Warsh, a former Federal Reserve governor, to be the next US central bank chief.

Trump's decision caps a closely watched search for a successor to Fed Chair Jerome Powell, whom the president has repeatedly lambasted for not cutting interest rates more swiftly.

"I have known Kevin for a long period of time, and have no doubt that he will go down as one of the GREAT Fed Chairmen, maybe the best," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

"On top of everything else, he is 'central casting,' and he will never let you down," Trump added.

Powell's term at the helm ends in May, although it remains to be seen if he will also step down from the Fed's powerful board of governors.

The president's selection ends a race that had narrowed to four contenders -- Warsh; current Fed governor Christopher Waller; Rick Rieder of BlackRock; and Trump's top economic adviser Kevin Hassett.

Trump said in separate social media posts that he did not pick Hassett, who heads the White House National Economic Council, as Hassett was "indescribably good" in his current role. Waller and Rieder would "all would have been outstanding" too, he said.

Warsh will need to be confirmed by the US Senate, facing questions by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle amid growing concerns about threats to the Fed's insulation from politics.

Kevin Warsh. REUTERS FILE

Nationwide strike planned against Trump's immigration policies

WASHINGTON, AP: Protesters across the US are calling for "no work, no school, no shopping" as part of a nationwide strike on Friday to oppose the Trump administration's immigration crackdown in Minneapolis.

The demonstrations are taking place amid widespread outrage over the killing of Alex Pretti, an intensive care nurse, who was shot multiple times after he used his cellphone to record Border Patrol officers conducting an immigration enforcement operation.

The death only reignited scrutiny over the administration's tactics after the January 7 death of Renee Good, who was fatally shot behind the wheel of her vehicle by a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

"The people of the Twin Cities have shown the way for the whole country - to stop ICE's reign of terror, we need to SHUT IT DOWN," some of the organisers wrote on their website. Multiple businesses announced they would be closed during Friday's "blackout," and some schools in Arizona and Colorado preemptively cancelled classes in anticipation of mass absences.

Some students took part in walkouts. In Michigan, several dozen walked out of Friday morning classes at Groves High School in Birmingham, north of Detroit.

Journalist Don Lemon arrested

Journalist Don Lemon was arrested in connection with an anti-immigration protest that disrupted a service at a Minnesota church and increased tensions between residents and the Trump administration, his lawyer said on Friday, reports AP. Lemon was arrested by federal agents in Los Angeles, where he had been covering the Grammy Awards, his attorney Abbe Lowell said.

Satellite photos show activity at Iran nuclear sites as tensions rise

Roofs built over two damaged buildings at Isfahan and Natanz

DUBAI, AP

As tensions soar over Iran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests, satellite images show activity at two Iranian nuclear sites bombed last year by Israel and the United States that may be a sign of Tehran trying to obscure efforts to salvage any materials remaining there.

The images from Planet Labs PBC show roofs have been built over two damaged buildings at the Isfahan and Natanz facilities, the first major activity noticeable by satellite at any of the country's stricken nuclear sites since Israel's 12-day war with Iran in June.

Those coverings block satellites from seeing what's happening on the ground - right now the only way for inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor the sites as Iran has prevented access.

Iran has not publicly discussed the activity at the two sites. The IAEA, a watchdog agency of the United Nations, did not respond to requests for comment.

US President Donald Trump repeatedly has demanded Iran negotiate a deal over its nuclear program to avert threatened American military strikes over the country's crackdown on protesters.

The US has moved the USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers into the Middle East, but it remains unclear whether Trump will decide to use force.

The new roofs do not appear to be a sign of reconstruction starting at the heavily damaged facilities, experts who examined the sites said. Instead, they are likely part of Iran's efforts "to assess whether key assets - such as limited stocks of highly enriched uranium - survived the strikes," said Andrea Stricker, who studies Iran for the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which has been sanctioned by Tehran.

"They want to be able to get at any recovered assets they can get to without Israel or the United States seeing what survived," she said.

A satellite image released by Planet Labs PBC shows an Iranian nuclear site. AP/PTI

Britain's Starmer seeks to bolster China ties despite Trump warning

SHANGHAI, AFP

Visiting Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Friday Britain has a "huge amount to offer" China, after his bid to forge closer ties prompted warnings from US President Donald Trump.

Starmer's trip is the first to China by a British prime minister in eight years, and follows in the footsteps of other Western leaders looking to counter an increasingly volatile United States.

Leaders from France, Canada and Finland have flocked to Beijing in recent weeks, recoiling from Trump's bid to seize Greenland and tariff threats against NATO allies.

Trump warned on Thursday it was "very dangerous" for Britain to be dealing with China.

Starmer brushed off those comments on Friday, noting that Trump was also expected to visit China in the months ahead.

"The US and the UK are very close allies, and that's why we discussed the visit with his team before we came," Starmer said in an interview with UK television.

"I don't think it is wise for the UK to stick its head in the sand. China is the second-largest economy in the world," he said.

Asked about Trump's comments on Friday, Beijing's foreign ministry said "China is willing to strengthen cooperation with all countries in the spirit of mutual benefit and win-win results".

Starmer met top Chinese leaders, including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, on Thursday, with both sides highlighting the need for closer ties.

He told business representatives from Britain and China on Friday that both sides had "warmly engaged" and "made some real progress".

"The UK has got a huge amount to offer," he said in a short speech at the UK-China Business Forum at the Bank of China.

The meetings the previous day provided "just the level of engagement that we hoped for", Starmer said.

He signed a series of agreements on Thursday, with Downing Street announcing Beijing had agreed to visa-free travel for British citizens visiting China for under 30 days, although Starmer acknowledged there was no start date for the arrangement yet.

The Chinese foreign ministry said only that it was "actively considering" the visa deal and would "make it public at an appropriate time upon completing the necessary procedures".

Starmer hailed the agreements as "symbolic of what we're doing with the relationship".

He also said Beijing had lifted sanctions on UK lawmakers targeted since 2021 for their criticism of alleged human rights abuses against China's Muslim Uyghur minority.

"President Xi said to me that that means all parliamentarians are welcome", Starmer said.

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer addresses Chinese and UK business delegations at House of UK reception in Shanghai on Friday. AFP

US asks Americans to remain vigilant and avoid crowds in B'desh

DHAKA, PTI: The US on Friday issued a "security alert" for its citizens in Bangladesh, asking them to remain vigilant and avoid crowds as political violence or extremist attacks may occur, potentially targeting rallies, polling stations, and religious sites during the election period.

In an advisory posted on its official website, the US Embassy in Bangladesh also instructed its citizens to avoid demonstrations and exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings.

Bangladesh will hold parliamentary elections and a national referendum simultaneously on February 12.

"During the election period, political violence or extremist attacks may occur potentially targeting rallies, polling stations, and religious sites such as churches, temples, mosques, and other places of religious significance," the security alert said.

Nasa delays Moon mission over frigid weather

WASHINGTON, AFP

Nasa on Friday postponed the earliest date that astronauts could fly to the Moon due to forecasts of freezing temperatures at the Florida launch site.

The earliest window for the moonshot will now be February 8, two days later than scheduled.

Nasa was preparing to conduct a key fueling test over the weekend of the 322 ft (98-meter) rocket that is on the Cape Canaveral launch pad in Florida.

But Arctic air surging across the United States has hampered life for days with frigid temperatures that came on the heels of a deadly winter storm.

Tropical Florida is not immune: the normally sunny state could experience its lowest temperatures in decades that are forecast to hover around freezing. "The expected weather this weekend would violate launch conditions," Nasa said in a statement.

Weather permitting, Nasa crews now are aiming to conduct their final tests Monday, after which a launch date will be determined.

The change narrows the possibility that NASA can launch their Artemis 2 team of four astronauts on their Moon flyby in February -- just three days of potential windows remain in that month.

The team remains in quarantine in Houston, Nasa said.

A view of the massive Artemis I Space Launch System rocket and Orion spacecraft. AFP

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Reforms from Centre and states led to growth projection upgrade: CEA

The Economic Survey 2025-26, tabled in Parliament by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, paints a rosy picture of India's economy. However, it also flags the uncertain global environment and risks to the economy due to the recent surge in cash freebies by states. Chief Economic Adviser **V Anantha Nageswaran**, who authored the Survey report, has termed India as an oasis of macro stability in an otherwise turbulent world. In an interview with *DH*'s **Gyanendra Keshri**, Nageswaran delves on the growth projections and challenges to the economy. He also talks about the US tariffs and the impact of gold and silver prices and currency fluctuations on the economy.

Edited excerpts:

In the Economic Survey the GDP growth potential has been upgraded to 7% from 6.5%, which was for the past three years. What are the key drivers for this optimism?

We said in 2022-23 that we will be upgrading this number (6.5% GDP growth potential) provided economic reforms happen and that's exactly what has happened. The government has opened up foreign direct investment, created more public investments and deregulation is happening in states. The Centre has notified Labour Codes, cut direct and indirect taxes, putting more disposable income in the hands of people and inflation has been well behaved. So, I think it is a combination of various actions, policy actions, process reforms in the states and continued improvement in infrastructure that has given us the confidence to upgrade India's trend growth estimate to 7%.

This upgraded 7% growth potential is only for next financial year or you expect the similar growth momentum in the subsequent years?

This is for the medium-term. It's about somewhere between 5 and 10 years. However, there is no specific number of years. These are not easy to define more precisely than that.

In the current financial year the growth has been substantially higher than last year's Economic Survey projection. The actual growth is projected to be 7.4% against the Economic Survey's projection of 6.3 to 6.8%. Do you expect a similar positive surprise in the next fiscal?

I think we should wait for the year to begin and see how global factors shape up. We have just made the projections, it would be premature to anticipate right now whether there will be an upside surprise for this number. I think it's too early to make that kind of forecast.

How will the proposed trade deal with the US impact GDP growth?

Certainly it will have a positive impact and the upside risk. If the deal happens the growth estimates will go up.

The Survey has flagged that Unconditional Cash Transfer schemes followed by many states are shrinking their fiscal space and negatively impacting their growth-oriented spending. What is the message to the states?

The message is obvious, we need to basically kind of find a way to use these resources to invest in building the capital assets and infrastructure that give a higher multiplier benefit to the households, to the individuals in terms of employment generation and income growth that will be more long-lasting than cash transfers. Apart from the fiscal consideration, the cash transfers are also having an impact on the public's incentive to take on jobs and upskill themselves.

V. Anantha Nageswaran

Do you expect any substantial change in states' strategies given the political compulsions?

That is not for me to speculate. States have shown an appetite for reforms as well. As and when things become clearer to them in terms of the net costs and benefits of what they are pursuing, I'm confident that they will do the right things.

Despite strong macro-economic fundamentals the Indian currency has been among the worst performers. It has depreciated by around 7% against the US dollar in the past one year. Why is the Rupee punching below its weight?

When capital flows become weaker, the currency becomes weaker as well. And that is what we have seen in 2025. The capital imports have become difficult. To tackle these issues, we need to do whatever we can to improve capital inflows into the economy. But sometimes there could be factors beyond our control. We shouldn't be worrying about things beyond our control, but we should focus on what it is that we can do within our capabilities and within our policy scope to make it easier for capital to flow into India.

Do you anticipate improvement in capital flows and rupee exchange rate this year?

We don't make forecasts for these kinds of variables. We can only have anticipations but the world is also becoming a trickier place and therefore there are multiple variables that could impact these things. The Ministry of Finance and the government don't make forecasts for the currency.

There has been a record run in gold and silver prices. The Survey notes that it may rise further given the global uncertainties. How will it impact the Indian economy?

I don't think gold and silver prices have any major impact on the economy. Gold prices have been up significantly since the beginning of the last year. Since Indian households have a lot of gold there can be a positive impact on household net worth and it creates a sense of feeling good.

Tech job openings up 8% in Feb

Full-time remote openings set to see strong rise

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

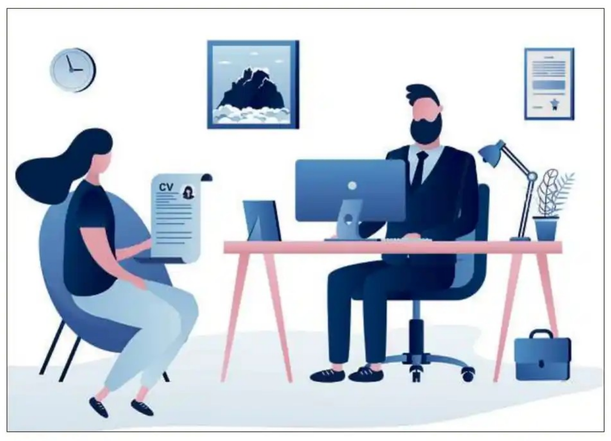
The country's technology sector is set to witness positive signs in terms of hiring in February, as active talent demand moves up by 8% month-on-month. According to specialist staffing firm Xpheno, this is the first significant move up after a sluggish six-month run since August last year.

The report said February 2026 is set to open with a strong rise in full-time remote openings, along with a significant sequential drop in hybrid openings. This comes at a time when IT firms are mandating full-time Work From Office.

Of total active tech jobs, job openings in Bengaluru alone are 26,000, which is an 8% increase compared to January 2026 and a 23% drop year-on-year.

Also, February opens with a Tech Jobs outlook for 109,000 active openings in the tech talent market in the country. The tech sector's current contribution to India's total active talent demand is 51%, going past the 50% mark for the third time in over 3 years now, according to Kamal Karanth, co-founder, Xpheno.

The tech openings for February 2026 have a 42% freshness index, with nearly half of all openings being published or refreshed in the last 2-week period.



Meanwhile, acquiring Artificial Intelligence (AI) and GenAI skills has become a strategic priority for senior employees. Professionals with over 15 years of work experience accounted for over 40% of all GenAI and AI / ML (Machine Learning) enrolments in the edtech platform Great Learning.

As senior leaders are expected to drive AI-led transformation, guide organisational strategy, and make informed decisions in increasingly data-driven environments, these top executives view such skills as essential for both strategic decision-making and for leadership effectiveness.

Both AI and ML continue to emerge as the most sought-after upskilling domains among professionals in 2025, accounting for 17% increase in year-on-year demand for the domain. This was followed by domains like Data Science, Software Development, Cloud Computing, and Cyber Security, Great Learning said in its insights.

Also, the demand for upskilling was highest among freshers and early-career professionals with 0–3 years of work experience, accounting to 48% of enrolments.

The Economic Survey 2026 also highlighted the need for upskilling in this AI era. Though 78% of professionals say that ongoing upskilling is critical for long-term career growth, according to a new survey by jobs and talent platform foundit (formerly Monster APAC & ME), strong intent is being undermined by structural constraints. Nearly two-thirds of respondents say lack of time or high course costs are holding them back from upskilling consistently, resulting in only 43% managing to learn on a weekly basis.

Meesho net loss up 12X to Rs 491 crore in Q3

The company announced its first quarterly results post-IPO

BENGALURU, DHNS

Meesho on Friday posted a 12-fold year-on-year increase in its consolidated net loss to Rs 490.7 crore for the quarter ended December 2025, compared to Rs 37.4 crore in the same quarter last year. In its first quarterly results post-IPO, the company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 3,517.6 crore for the December quarter, a 31% increase compared to Rs 2,678.6 crore.

The e-commerce platform's placed orders for Q3 FY26 stood at 690 million, up 36% year-on-year, while Annual Transacting Users grew 34% y-o-y to 251 million.

On a last twelve-month basis, users transacted 9.78 times per year on average, growing 9% y-o-y. Driven by strong user growth and increasing purchase frequency, Meesho reported Net Merchandise Value (NMV) of Rs 10,995 crore in Q3 FY26, representing 26% y-o-y growth.

On a last twelve months basis, free cash flow stood at Rs 56 crore.

Vidit Aatrey, Founder and CEO, Meesho, said, "Our Q3 results reflect the strength of Meesho's flywheel, with more users transacting more frequently, driving platform growth while building long-term habits in previously underserved markets."

In a letter to shareholders, Aatrey said that they focus on Free Cash Flow because it reflects what actually remains after re-investment. "We monitor LTM FCF (Last Twelve Months Free Cash Flow) closely and consider it in our decision-making processes. Decisions such as investments into marketing and technology are evaluated through the lens of their impact on FCF generation in the long term," he said.

Meesho also said that it is deepening the integration of AI into its platform. It said AI-based voice search is getting better through new launches during the quarter, improving new user conversions. Meesho also expects significant improvement in Adjusted EBITDA margin in the next two quarters, returning to Q1 FY26 levels, driven by logistics cost recovery and operating leverage on user growth and technology investments made in FY26.

Centre's fiscal deficit touches 54.5% of full year target by Dec

NEW DELHI, PTI

The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of December stood at Rs 8.55 lakh crore, or 54.5% of the annual budget target for 2025-26, compared to 56.7% in the year-ago period, government data released on Friday showed.

The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit (the gap between expenditure and revenue) during 2025-26 at 4.4% of GDP, or Rs 15.69 lakh crore.

According to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the central government received Rs 25.25 lakh crore or 72.2% of the corresponding budget estimates (BE) of 2025-26 of total receipts up to December 2025.

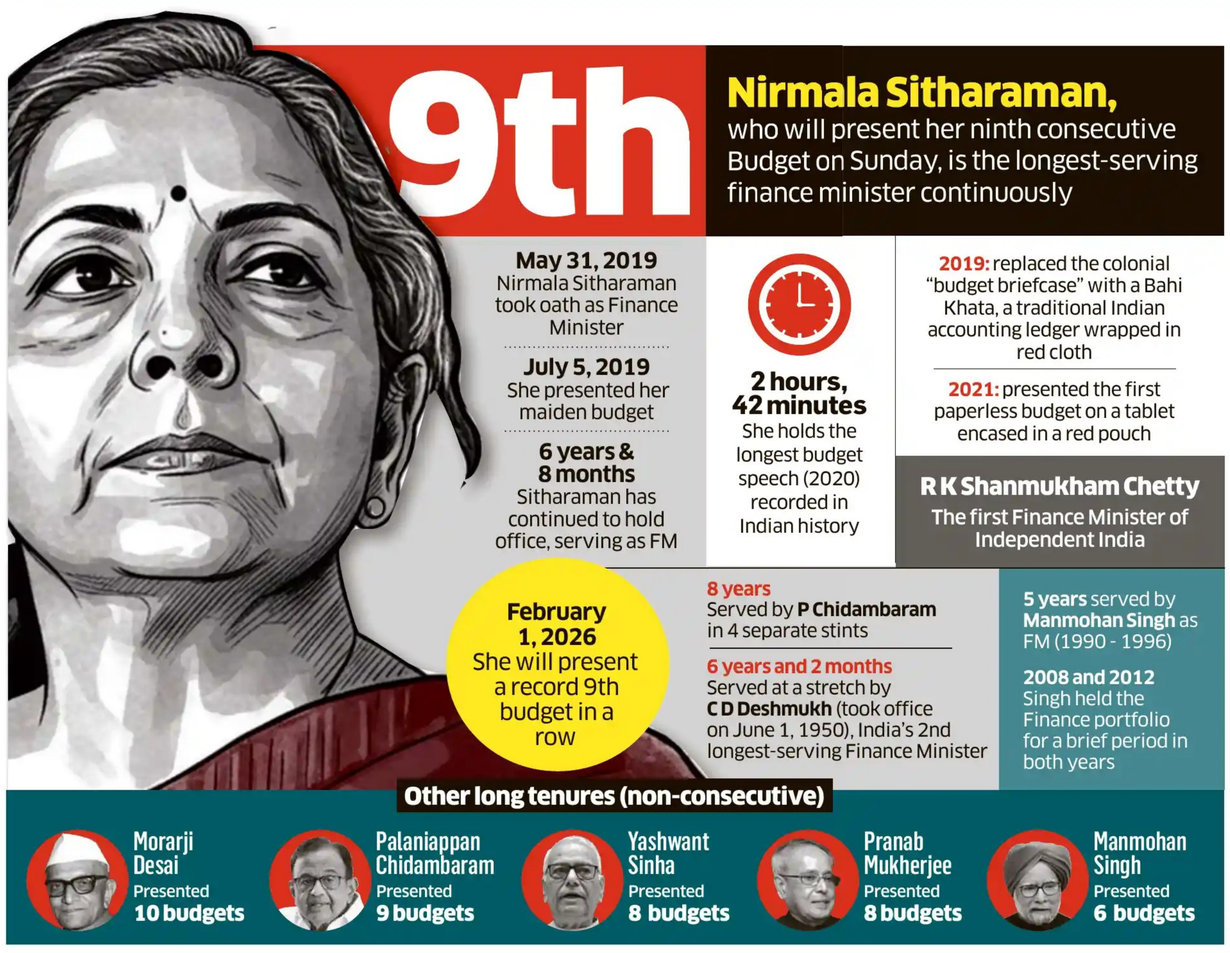
It comprised Rs 19.39 lakh crore of tax revenue (net to Centre), Rs 5.39 lakh crore of non-tax revenue, and Rs 46,047 crore of non-debt capital receipts.

The CGA data showed that Rs 10.38 lakh crore was transferred to states as devolution of share of taxes by the central government during April-December, which is Rs 1.37 lakh crore higher than the year-ago period.

Total expenditure incurred by the central government was Rs 33.8 lakh crore (66.7% of the corresponding BE 2025-26), out of which Rs 25.93 lakh crore was on the revenue account and Rs 7.87 lakh crore on the capital account.

Out of the total revenue expenditure, Rs 9.11 lakh crore was on account of interest payments and Rs 3.17 lakh crore on major subsidies.

The Economic Survey 2025-26, tabled in Parliament on Thursday, showed that the government is well on track to meet the fiscal deficit target of 4.4% of GDP estimated for the current financial year based on broad trends.


9th
Nirmala Sitharaman,
who will present her ninth consecutive Budget on Sunday, is the longest-serving finance minister continuously
May 31, 2019
Nirmala Sitharaman took oath as Finance Minister
July 5, 2019
She presented her maiden budget
6 years & 8 months
Sitharaman has continued to hold office, serving as FM
February 1, 2026
She will present a record 9th budget in a row
2 hours, 42 minutes
She holds the longest budget speech (2020) recorded in Indian history
2019: replaced the colonial "budget briefcase" with a Bahi Khata, a traditional Indian accounting ledger wrapped in red cloth
2021: presented the first paperless budget on a tablet encased in a red pouch
R K Shanmukham Chetty
The first Finance Minister of Independent India
8 years
Served by P Chidambaram in 4 separate stints
6 years and 2 months
Served at a stretch by C D Deshmukh (took office on June 1, 1950), India's 2nd longest-serving Finance Minister
5 years served by Manmohan Singh as FM (1990 - 1996)
2008 and 2012
Singh held the Finance portfolio for a brief period in both years
Other long tenures (non-consecutive)
Morarji Desai
Presented 10 budgets
Palaniappan Chidambaram
Presented 9 budgets
Yashwant Sinha
Presented 8 budgets
Pranab Mukherjee
Presented 8 budgets
Manmohan Singh
Presented 6 budgets

Rupee hits intraday record low of 92.02 against USD

MUMBAI, PTI: The rupee on Friday hit its record low of 92.02 before ending 6 paise higher at 91.93 against the US dollar amid a firm American currency and geopolitical uncertainties.

Forex traders said a negative trend in domestic equities weighed on investor sentiment and capped gains in the domestic currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened strong at 91.89 and further strengthened to 91.82 against the greenback. However, it weakened later in the session to touch its lowest-ever level of 92.02 before ending at 91.93, registering a gain of 6 paise from the previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee ended flat at its lowest level of 91.99 against the dollar. The currency recorded its previous lowest level of 92 a dollar on January 23.

"Indian rupee recovered from all-time lows on an overnight decline in crude oil and commodity prices. However, recovery in the US dollar index and FII outflows capped sharp gains. The dollar index rose after Donald Trump said that he would announce his nominee to head the US Federal Reserve," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.45% higher at 96.57.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.96% lower at $70.03 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 296.59 points or 0.36% to settle at 82,269.78, while the Nifty fell 98.25 points or 0.39% to 25,320.65.

Foreign institutional investors turned net buyers and purchased equities worth Rs 2,251.37 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

RBI data released on Friday showed India's forex reserves jumped by $8.053 billion to an all-time high of $709.413 billion during the week ended January 23.

CORPORATE SCORECARD

Facebook India FY25 profit rises 28%

Facebook India has posted around 28% increase in standalone profit at Rs 647.45 crore for financial year ended March 2025, according to the company's regulatory filing shared by Tofler.

The company had logged a profit of Rs 504.93 crore a year ago. Revenue from operations grew 25% to Rs 3,792.91 crore in FY2025 from Rs 3,034.82 a year ago. "The company's total expenses for the fiscal were reported as Rs 2,881 crore," Tofler said.

Employee expenses of Meta-owned Facebook India Online Services Private Limited grew 36% to Rs 648.57 crore during the fiscal as against Rs 476 crore a year ago.

The company's tax expense was higher by 46% to Rs 305.18 crore in FY2025 from Rs 209.2 crore in FY2024. According to an analysis by the market intelligence firm Tofler, the operating margin of Facebook declined marginally and net margin inched up to 16.9% in FY2025.

Canara Bank Q3 net profit rises 25%

State-owned Canara Bank has reported a 25% jump in its consolidated net profit for the December 2025 quarter at Rs 5,254 crore. The bank had reported a net profit of Rs 4,214 crore in the year-ago period.

On a standalone basis, its net profit for the quarter grew to Rs 5,155 crore from Rs 4,104 crore a year ago, as per an exchange filing.

The core net interest income increased by just 1.13% to Rs 9,252 crore despite a 13.59% growth in the global advances, but was impacted by a 0.33% narrowing in the net interest margin.

The non-interest income jumped 36% to Rs 7,900 crore, helped largely by the treasury income driven by the sale of investments.

A bulk of loan growth came from the retail segment, with vehicle and auto leading the charge.

The overall deposit growth came at 12.95% during the quarter.

On the asset quality front, the fresh slippages came down to Rs 1,857 crore from the Rs 2,363 crore in the year-ago period and Rs 2,061 crore in the quarter-ago period.

The gross non-performing assets ratio reduced further to 2.08% of the advances from 2.35% in the year-ago period. Provisions grew 6.19% to Rs 3,964 crore during the reporting quarter.

The overall capital adequacy stood at 16.50% as of December 31, 2025.

Prestige Estates Q3 profit jumps 8 times

Realty firm Prestige Estates Projects Ltd has reported a nearly eight times jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 244.7 crore in the third quarter of this fiscal year on higher income. Its net profit stood at Rs 32.2 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose sharply to Rs 3,885.5 crore during the October-December period of this fiscal from Rs 1,697.9 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing.

Brigade Enterprises Q3 profit down 13%

Realty firm Brigade Enterprises on Friday reported a 13% decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 205.83 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2025.

Its net profit stood at Rs 235.52 crore in the year-ago period.

Total income rose to Rs 1,623.18 crore in the October-December period of this fiscal from Rs 1,529.68 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing.

Bajaj Auto Q3 net up 10% at Rs 2,750 cr

Bajaj Auto on Friday posted a 10% year-on-year increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,750 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2025, led by enhanced sales volume growth across markets.

The Pune-based firm reported a net profit of Rs 2,196 crore for the October-December quarter of the last fiscal.

Revenue from operations increased to Rs 16,204 crore for the third quarter as against Rs 13,169 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing.

The company said its overall sales in the third quarter increased 10% year on year to 13,41,252 units as against 12,24,472 units in the year-ago period.

- Agencies

Zupee cuts 200 jobs as part of restructuring

BENGALURU, DHNS: Online gaming platform Zupee is firing 200 employees as part of a restructuring exercise. Recently, the startup had cut around 170 jobs after the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, proposed a ban on all real money gaming (RMG).

Though the startup did not respond to queries, Zupee founder Dilsher Singh Malhi has reportedly said that they continue to align the organisation with long-term priorities and some changes are necessary to ensure the business remains sustainable and future-focused.

Founded in 2018 by Dilsher Singh Malhi and Siddhant Saurabh, the platform provides access to skill-based casual games. According to Tracxn, Zupee has raised $122 million in funding from investors like WestCap, Z47 and AJ Capital Partners.

The startup was valued at $600 million in 2022.

The Bill classifies 'online money game' as an online game, irrespective of whether such a game is based on skill, chance, or both, played by a user by paying fees, depositing money or other stakes in expectation of winning, which entails monetary and other enrichment in return for money or other stakes; but shall not include any e-sports.

The house on the hill

Sanjay and Sanjana are eager to explore an abandoned building. Suryakumari Dennison describes what happens when they do

Every evening, Sanjay and Sanjana gazed curiously at a dilapidated dwelling on top of a hill. They had moved to the neighbourhood recently, and the old house had aroused their interest. It would not be difficult to go there since they had heard it was empty. Besides, the summit on which it stood was fairly close to where Sanjay and Sanjana lived. So far, though, the twins had not attempted to approach the place. Their mother's colleague had categorically declared that the house was haunted.

"Keep away from the house on the hill," said Bina aunty firmly. It was advice that Sanjay and Sanjana were not keen to take. Day after day, they stared at the ruined structure, which loomed in the distance, wondering why they should dread it. They told each other that nobody believed Bina aunty's tall tales. Surely there could be no danger in a trip to the house on the hill. In fact, said the twins to each other (thinking the same thing, at the same time, as they often did), their exciting excursion would be more fun in the dark.

Sanjay and Sanjana chose a moonlit night for their adventure. It was perfect. There was not a drop of rain, and the clear sky indicated that there was none to come. The twins picked up torches, for those would be required within the house. Not that they had decided what they would do once they were inside. Indeed, they were rather vague about that part of their plan. Still, neither Sanjay nor Sanjana would admit to doubt. They slipped out of their room and set off while their parents were asleep.

Both were quiet as they headed towards the hill, giggling nervously if one of them stepped on a twig that crackled in the silence. It took the twins longer to reach the top than they had expected. Viewed from afar, the hill had appeared neither high nor steep, but the twins needed all their energy for the ascent.

Puffing and panting, they made their way up, then sank down breathless right in front of their destination.

The haunted house was in a sorry state. Most of its roof was missing, and windows with broken panes hung loosely on their hinges. The front door had a gaping hole in it, so Sanjay and Sanjana would have no problem entering it. Now that the moment had come, the twins hesitated, waiting uncertainly as time ticked by.

At last, the twins realised that if they were to grab a few hours of sleep before school the next morning, they had to go in without delay and get back quickly. Creeping through the opening, Sanjay and Sanjana found themselves in what looked like a large hall. It was hard to tell, for their pocket torches were not bright enough to completely dispel the darkness. Growing used to the dim light, they noticed the thick layer of dust on the floor and furniture. Cobwebs covered the walls and ceiling, and there was a musty smell.

Sanjay and Sanjana recalled Bina aunty's scary story about the house. Apparently, an elderly couple, neglected by their offspring, had died there several years ago and had haunted the house since. They had been sighted in the kitchen, at the dining table, and on the balcony until the family had fled. After that, the place remained vacant. The twins gazed around fearfully. What if the restless spirits were still around? It was best to leave immediately.

As the children turned to run, Sanjana bumped into a chair. She yelped with pain and then in terror as something struck her on the face. "It's the ghosts!" Screamed Sanjay, as he and his twin were attacked by flying forms. Panic-stricken, they stumbled outside and charged down the hill as fast as their 10-year-old legs could carry them.

Meanwhile, those residing in the house were puzzled by such behaviour. They wondered why people had come in at all, and having done so, what had made them rush out so suddenly. They wished the youngsters had done some sweeping and scrubbing before their hasty exit. The occupants would have liked their home to be clean and hygienic, but on the whole, they were quite content. The bats had lived long and happily in the house on the hill.

4 MOVIES on love

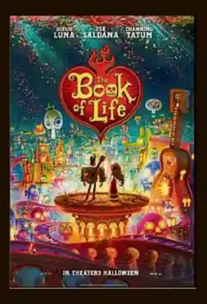
They explore relationships in different forms — familial, romantic and between friends

The Princess and the Frog (2009)

Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, this is one of the last Disney films made using traditional hand-drawn animation. Set in 1920s New Orleans, the film weaves together romance, parental love, and self-love. It follows Tiana, a hardworking young woman who dreams of opening her own restaurant. After kissing a cursed prince and turning into a frog herself, she embarks on a journey through the bayou to break the spell. Along the way, Tiana and Prince Naveen learn about love, responsibility, and what truly matters in life. The film shows love growing through shared hardship and mutual support. It received three Academy Award nominations, including Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song.

Paddington (2014)

Directed by Paul King, 'Paddington' explores love through the idea of finding family where you least expect it. The story begins with Paddington, a polite, marmalade-loving bear who travels from Peru to London after losing his home. He arrives at Paddington Station with nothing but a suitcase and a note that reads, "Please look after this bear". Love is depicted through small gestures in the film — Mrs Brown offering him shelter, the family slowly warming up to him, and Paddington's unfailing kindness even when he is misunderstood. His memories of Aunt Lucy, who raised him with warmth and strong moral values, reinforce the theme of nurturing love. The film was nominated for two BAFTA Awards — Best British Film and Best Adapted Screenplay.



The Book of Life (2014)

Directed by Jorge R Gutiérrez, 'The Book of Life' follows Manolo, a gentle musician torn between family expectations and his love for María. When a magical wager sends him on a journey through the Land of the Dead, Manolo must prove that courage and love matter more than fear. The story celebrates staying true to oneself while honouring love, family, and friendship. The film also strongly explores familial love through Manolo's complicated relationship with his father. The film was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature and won several awards for animation and art direction.

Luca (2021)

Directed by Enrico Casarosa, 'Luca' explores love through friendship, belonging, and acceptance. The film follows Luca, a young sea monster who experiences a magical summer on land in an Italian seaside town. As he forms a deep friendship with Alberto, Luca learns about courage, empathy, belonging, and being accepted for who he truly is, even when it means revealing his secret. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature

Dear Subhas Chandra Bose...

Open Sesame readers write letters to the freedom fighter

Dear Netaji,

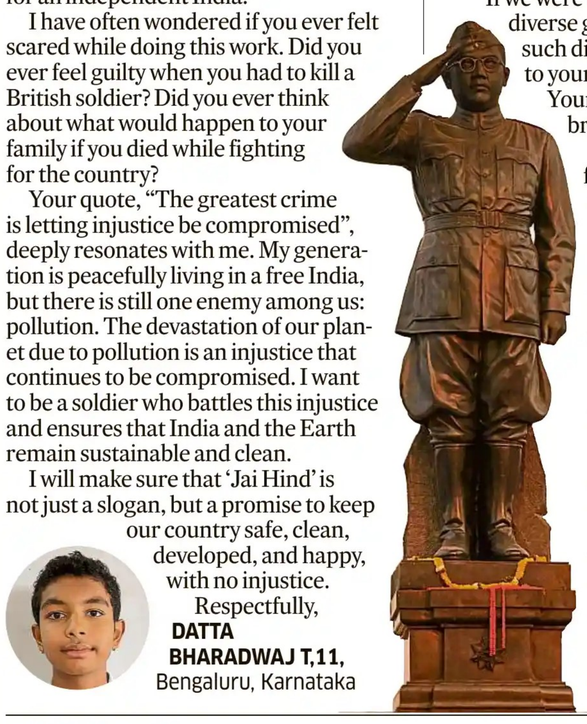
Sir, whenever I see you in your uniform, I do not see just a soldier. I see a person who sacrificed everything for an independent India.

I have often wondered if you ever felt scared while doing this work. Did you ever feel guilty when you had to kill a British soldier? Did you ever think about what would happen to your family if you died while fighting for the country?

Your quote, "The greatest crime is letting injustice be compromised", deeply resonates with me. My generation is peacefully living in a free India, but there is still one enemy among us: pollution. The devastation of our planet due to pollution is an injustice that continues to be compromised. I want to be a soldier who battles this injustice and ensures that India and the Earth remain sustainable and clean.

I will make sure that 'Jai Hind' is not just a slogan, but a promise to keep our country safe, clean, developed, and happy, with no injustice.

Respectfully,
DATTA BHARADWAJ T,11, Bengaluru, Karnataka



Respected Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose,

I am writing this letter to express my deep admiration and respect for you. You are one of our greatest freedom fighters, who showed immense courage and determination during the struggle for our country's independence.

If we were to meet, I would ask you about the challenges you faced while uniting diverse groups for the freedom movement and how you stayed motivated during such difficult times. I would also be curious to know what advice you would give to young people today to help keep the spirit of patriotism alive.

Your dedication to the nation has taught me the importance of bravery, discipline, and selflessness.

Thank you for your invaluable contribution to India's freedom. I promise to remember your legacy and strive to be a responsible and patriotic citizen.

Regards,
AMOGH SHARMA, 14, Jaipur, Rajasthan

Dear Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose,

I was thrilled at the thought of having a conversation with you on your birth anniversary, January 23. If I could ask you one question, it would be: What inspired you to lead the Azad Hind Fauj and fight for India's freedom with such unwavering courage?

I am passionate about learning about India's freedom struggle and am inspired by heroes like you to make a positive difference in my community.

Your slogan, "Give me blood, and I shall give you freedom!" motivates me to be brave and work hard for my country's betterment.

Thank you for being an eternal source of inspiration for young Indians like me.

Jai Hind!
RAKSHA A, 13, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dear Netaji,

As I write this letter, shortly after your birth anniversary, I am reminded of a quote: "The glory of life is not in never failing, but in rising up each time you fail."

You trained the Indian National Army and fought for India's freedom even though many leaders opposed your actions. What made you take such a bold step?

You fought the British despite having limited resources, while they possessed advanced weapons. What motivated you to take such a risk?

You received support from countries like Germany, Italy, and Japan, even though many influential leaders opposed this decision. What did you say to them that made them support your cause?

I also wonder about your meeting with Hitler. You wanted freedom for India, while Hitler wanted to conquer other countries. How did you discuss your differing views with him?

The quote "Your only limit is your mind" resonates with me, and I feel it connects deeply with your life as well.

Thank you, Netaji, for showing me what true inspiration and patriotism look like.

Yours sincerely,
RAKSHITHA V S, 11, Bengaluru, Karnataka

This Week:

Striking stripes

Open Sesame Quiz

Take the fun Open Sesame quiz, and stand a chance to win gift vouchers worth Rs 500. Open to children below 16 years.

Q1 January 31 is International Zebra Day. Which is the largest, rarest and most endangered of the three surviving zebra species, all of which are threatened by poaching and loss of habitat?

Q2 What is another collective noun for a herd or zeal of zebras, descriptive of the remarkable visual effect of their stripes, especially when they move in a group?

Q3 A southern subspecies of the common, geographically widespread plains zebra is known for migrating long distances. Which 19th-century British explorer, naturalist and traveller is this zebra named after?

Scan the QR code
Or visit bit.ly/DHopensesame to participate in the quiz.

Q4 **Rhyme Time:** Two clues to which the answers rhyme with each other.
Clue A: The zebra in the 'Madagascar' movies is _.
Clue B: Social gathering for fun.

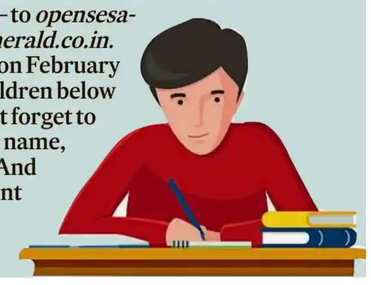
Q5 **Clue Cluster:** Which country has the zebra as its national animal, and two zebras on its coat of arms? Use these clues.
a) Pula
b) Kalahari
c) Gaborone
d) Duma Boko

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: R Ramanathan (12), Bengaluru; Mirambika Ganesh (15), Kollegala; Meghana Hardikar (14), Bailhongal.

POETS IN THE MAKING

Want to see your poetry in print?

Send in poems on the topic 'Special people in my life' to *Open Sesame*. You may be featured in an upcoming edition. Mail your work — not more than 12 lines — to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Entries close on February 5. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph.



LET'S DEBATE!

Want to take part in the upcoming *Open Sesame* debate? Share your thoughts in a crisp 200-word essay on the topic 'Should exams be replaced with project-based assessments?'. Mail your works to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Entries close on February 19. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, school and city. And send us a recent photograph.

Word of the Week

unabashed

(adjective)
— to not worry about possible criticism or embarrassment

Usage:
— Surumy was unabashed in her enthusiasm for the new project.
— Nitin unabashedly ran to the wedding buffet the minute it was served.

ART CORNER

Love painting?

Want to showcase your flair for colours? Send your paintings on the theme 'Love in bloom' to *Open Sesame* and stand a chance to get featured in an upcoming edition. Mail photographs of your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in*. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph of yourself. Entries close on February 12.

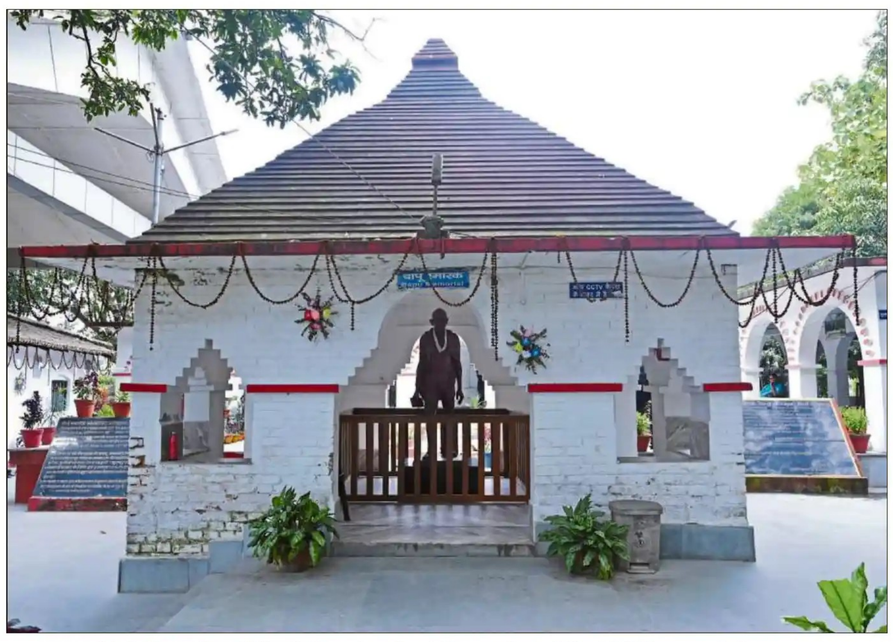
Site of Gandhi's first anti-colonial battle in India

CHAMPARAN TODAY

Gandhi's journey as a mass leader in India began in a quiet village in Bihar, when he took up the cause of oppressed indigo farmers. Ashish Pandey visits his ashram in Bhitiharwa, and finds his legacy living on. January 30, when Gandhi was shot dead, is Martyrs' Day

The single-lane road from Narkatiaganj to Bhitiharwa feels like a corridor through time. Once walked by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917, the 16 km stretch is now paved with bitumen and is marked by rural bustle. In October and November, lush fields of sugarcane and paddy dot the route. I was in north Bihar during the Assembly elections and took the opportunity to visit the less-known Gandhi Ashram in Bhitiharwa, a village in West Champaran district. The approach to the ashram is still marked by the wilderness Gandhi first encountered.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a barrister who returned to India from South Africa in 1915, began his journey towards becoming the Mahatma during his stay in Champaran. It was here that he led a landmark rebellion in India's struggle for independence, rooted in non-violence and civil disobedience.



Mahatma Gandhi's statue stands at the centre of the Bhitiharwa Ashram, where he stayed and spearheaded the Champaran campaign in 1917.

Letter to Gandhi

In 1917, as nations across the world were locked in World War I, two men from Champaran were setting the stage to challenge British atrocities through non-violence. They wrote to Gandhi, urging him to lead the movement. They were Rajkumar Shukla, an indigo farmer, and Pir Muhammed Munis, a schoolteacher-turned-journalist.

One of the letters, titled 'Sad Tale' and written on February 27, 1917, compared the struggle of Bihar's farmers to Gandhi's own struggle in South Africa. "Our sad tale is much worse than what you and your comrades have suffered in South Africa... 19 lakh people of Champaran are waiting to see you. They have full hope that they will be liberated as soon as your feet touch the soil of Champaran," reads an excerpt. The letter was reproduced in the 2014 book 'Champaran: Satyagraha Ke Sutradhar, Rajkumar Shukla ki Diary' (Maharajadhiraja Kameshwar Singh Kalyani Foundation).

A well, a school, and a bronze bell from Mahatma Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Gandhi's time at the ashram are key attractions.

Later, in his autobiography, 'My Experiments With Truth', Gandhi would describe Shukla as a man who would not take 'no' for an answer. "Rajkumar Shukla was one of these (the oppressed). He was filled with a passion to wash away the stain of indigo... He followed me to Cawnpore (Kanpur) and then to Ahmedabad. 'Appoint a day,' he pleaded. At last I promised him."

While history often highlights Shukla's 'resolute' pursuit of Gandhi, it was Munis' intellectual "nationalisation" of the peasant struggle in his 'Sad Tale' letter that truly drew the Mahatma to Champaran. Munis was dubbed a 'rogue journalist' by the British for his scathing writing.

Through their collective efforts, Gandhi learned how indigo factory owners (British planters) were imposing the Tinkathiya rule on farmers. Under this arrangement, peasants were required to cultivate indigo on three kathas of every bigha of land and sell it at fixed, low prices to the planters. Since a bigha comprises 20 kathas, this amounted to 15% of their landholdings. The exploitative practice led to widespread debt and hardship.

Indigo, a deep blue dye, was in high demand in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, before synthetic dyes became common. To meet this demand, British planters forced Indian peasants to grow indigo, often without any legal basis. In 1813, the first indigo factory was established in Champaran. By 1850, it had become the region's dominant crop.

Bold experiment

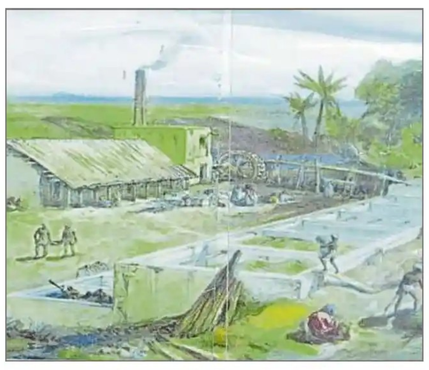
Gandhi finally arrived in Champaran in April 1917. He first stayed in the town of Motihari, where he documented the farmers' plight. It was here that the British served him a notice to leave Champaran by the "first available train". He defied the notice in his own style of civil disobedience. He famously told a court that he would not contest the notice but instead plead "guilty". He argued he would rather listen to the "voice of his conscience" and face imprisonment for it than leave Champaran. The trial eventually went against the local administration, and Gandhi was allowed to proceed with his inquiry of exploitation.

In 'My Experiments with Truth', Gandhi described the Champaran uprising as "a bold experiment with Truth and Ahimsa". He wrote about his daily meetings with ryots (peasants), listening to their grievances, and crafting responses that would force the British administration to first acknowledge injustice and then rectify it.

Gandhi first lived at his ashram in Motihari and later at Bhitiharwa, about 100 km apart. These ashrams served as both his home and office, where he interacted with locals and corresponded with British officials. They were also the first sites where he put his philosophy of non-violent resistance, Satyagraha, into practice on Indian soil.

Ashram of big ideas

Walking past the iron gate and modest walls of the Bhitiharwa Gandhi Ashram feels like stepping into a quiet yet important chapter of India's freedom struggle. The ashram embodies simplicity of the highest order, one that Gandhi himself would have approved of. Its courtyard exudes serene stillness, broken only by leaves drifting to the ground in the wind and the distant calls of birds perched in the trees across the campus.



Photographs and illustrations depicting indigo cultivation and peasant uprising are also on display.

The afternoon I visited the ashram, I saw children playing cricket in what must once have been its open grounds. In a corner, a few fishermen sat knitting their nets. Though they had no formal education, they were well aware of the ashram's unique place in history. One of them said, "Is jagah Gandhi baba ki aatma rehti hai (Gandhi's soul rests here)." Another added, "Gandhiji ka saara planning yahi se shuru hua." He meant that this was the very site where Gandhi began his peaceful resistance against the British Raj, a movement that would spread across the country in the years to come.

At the centre of the ashram stands a statue of Gandhi, hands by his side and draped in a crumpled shawl. He holds a book in one hand, a reminder of the school he started here during his stay.

The small room where Gandhi stayed during his Champaran sojourn immediately caught my attention. The walls are plain, the floor rough, and the lone wooden cot stands firm, as if still carrying Gandhi's will that was second to none. The chakki (wheat grinder) used by his wife Kasturba rests in a corner, carefully preserved inside a glass box. It was a simple household tool in those days but it also represented self-reliance, the heart of Gandhian thought.

My eyes then fell on a wooden table, plain and unpolished — it was on this table that important letters and notes were written. It was also a witness to countless conversations about justice and reform among those who sat across from each other. Next to the table hangs an old school bell, rusted by time, yet dignified in its stillness. The bell symbolises how Gandhi not only taught children to read and write but also to live by the values of honesty and truth that he espoused.

All of Gandhi's belongings in the ashram carry one common message: to live a simple life and think of the larger good.

The ashram serves as a reminder that big movements are built on small acts: visiting a ryot's hut, exercising patience in a meeting, spending a day recording grievances, and publicly refusing to accept arbitrary power. It was heartening to see school-children being given a guided tour by local volunteers. I learnt that such tours are a regular feature at the ashram, with schools from across Bihar visiting frequently.

Turning point

When Gandhi arrived at Bhitiharwa on November 20, 1917, he was already a well-known figure because of his success in South Africa, and his legal battles in Motihari. However, he was yet to emerge as a national political icon.

Gandhi came as a reformer determined to probe the roots of rural misery. Though he came almost alone, he was soon joined by educators and doctors from all around. These volunteers became catalysts in the fight against the British indigo planters.

The movement called for social uplift along with legal battles. It was in Bhitiharwa that Gandhi famously remarked that "the way to Swaraj is through the door of the village school". He urged locals to donate land to start a school, and in response to his call, Baba Ramnaren Das, a priest, offered his land. The school was managed by Kasturba and other volunteers. It had nearly 80 students in its first year and continues to function to this day.

The ashram Gandhi established was born out of necessity and haste, but it soon became a symbol of quiet defiance, transforming the entire village into a laboratory for revolution. He divided his time between recording the harrowing testimonies of oppressed farmers and teaching villagers basic sanitation.

Defiance through letters

During his stay at Bhitiharwa, Gandhi's correspondence with British officials became a testament to the power of Satyagraha. On the surface, these letters appeared to be complaints, but they were far more than that. They were legal and moral challenges that stripped away the administrative veneer of the British Raj.

When the local planters' henchmen burned down the makeshift hut in which he stayed, Gandhi wrote to the administration not to demand police protection, but to inform them that the villagers would rebuild it themselves with "better materials". Later, under the supervision of Kasturba and volunteers, a permanent structure of brick and clay was raised. This became a powerful way to highlight the British administration's inability to maintain law and order against the planters, a point Gandhi later used effectively during the Champaran Agrarian Committee hearings.

From the humble confines of the ashram, Gandhi addressed high-ranking officials such as the district magistrate of Champaran, W B Heycock, and the commissioner of the Tirhut division, L F Morshead. One of his most famous assertions of his right to remain in Champaran was written to the district magistrate: "I have entered the villages with the object of surveying the condition of the ryots and understanding their grievances... I am unable to leave this district until my inquiry is finished." (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 13)

Between April and November 1917, Gandhi's relentless pursuit of the cause made the seemingly impossible happen with the enactment of the Champaran Agrarian Act in 1918. It brought an end to the oppressive Tinkathiya system and liberated peasants from forced indigo cultivation. The Tinkathiya system, which began in the 1860s and reached its peak of exploitation in the 1910s, was abolished through a combination of letters, civil disobedience, and some legal hearings. And all this in less than a year.

Lasting legacy

Today, the village of Bhitiharwa has modern amenities such as cellular connectivity, electricity, and good roads. Yet, amid these changes, stories of Gandhi continue to echo in some families. For Rajendra Sharma, who hails from the nearby Gonaha block, stories of Gandhi were part of his childhood. "It's a matter of pride for us that such a great man came here and gave this place its own identity," he says.

Echoing the sentiment, Vijay Kant, a retired schoolteacher born in independent India, says, "This place gained recognition not only on India's map, but globally, because of Gandhi and his work here." But much has changed now. "Earlier, when I travelled outside Bihar and said I was from Champaran, people would immediately say, 'Oh! Champaran, Gandhi wala Champaran'. Now they say, 'Oh! Champaran mutton'. The story of Gandhi's connection with this place should not fade away. It needs to be told and retold," he says.

Some initiatives honour the region's historical legacy. A train now connects Motihari to Porbandar in Gujarat, symbolically linking Gandhi's karmabhoomi to his janmabhoomi. Meanwhile, the train running from Raxaul in Champaran to Delhi has been fittingly named the Satyagraha Express.

The place also holds political relevance. Almost every leading politician from Bihar has visited the ashram at some point. Nitish Kumar visited it as chief minister during the centenary celebrations of the Champaran Satyagraha in 2017. More recently, Prashant Kishor of Jan Suraj began his political journey here by launching his first 'pad yatra'.

When I left Bhitiharwa, dusk was folding over the fields. The most striking aspect of my visit was that I had learnt more about a movement that shaped India's freedom struggle, and got a glimpse of how extraordinary change was brought about by common people. Bhitiharwa, in that sense, is not just a place to be visited, it is a place to be listened to — it makes a persuasive call to continue working for dignity and justice.

Like this story?
Email: dhonsat@deccanherald.co.in

MUSICANA

Instrumental dance music that aims to capture emotions

Derek and The Cats blends Afro house, funk and techno, writes Rashmi Rajagopal

For Bengaluru band Derek and The Cats (DATC), every song is built around a feeling or emotion. That their music is instrumental, makes this principle all the more significant. "Instrumental music does not tell you what you should feel. It allows you to arrive at the emotion yourself," says Derek Mathias, who brought the band together in 2022.

Next week, the band will perform in Bengaluru as part of the Jazz India Circuit. The band also comprises Joel Rozario (percussions), Kenneth Besterwitch (drums), Gautam David (saxophone), Anand Murali (keyboards), Vishal Variar (bass) and Adesh Vinod (guitars).

Mathias always wanted to be a cricketer. "I was selected in the state probables list, but after seeing the level of cricket that was being played, I realised I could not match it. When I stopped training, I had plenty of time on my hands and somehow started exploring my musical interests," he says.

The 26-year-old is a trained pianist, who started learning the instrument when he was a child. "I trained in piano for about eight years. But back then it was just another class I would attend. It was only when I was in university that I fully immersed myself in music purely for the joy of it," he shares. He discovered his love for Queen and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and eventually found his way to jazz. "Though DATC is not a jazz band, it is heavily inspired by jazz," he explains, adding that he would describe their music as dance music that blends Afro house, funk and techno.

The beauty of jazz is that one will never hear the same song played the same way twice. It evolves with time and with the artiste, Mathias states. Likewise, the band's songs are not always played the same way at every performance. "The way the song is played is a reflection of how the song speaks to us at the time," he explains.

In August 2025, the band released their second album 'People to Meet, Places to See'. The album was written while touring the country. "I gave myself and the band a target of writing one song in every city we visited," he recalls. 'Cubbon Park', written in their home city, aims to capture the feeling of lazy Sunday morning walks in the park. Another track, 'Leticia', is named for Mathias' grandmother. "She was in poor health and I was dealing with the emotions of seeing someone I love go through a serious health problem and that is when I wrote the song," he explains. In 'Techno police', a sudden police siren that went past their studio at the perfect time, became an integral part of the track.

Derek and The Cats released their second album in August 2025.

African cinema a quest for roots

Early filmmakers used the medium to reclaim their identity and challenge colonial narratives, writes Pranati A S. Cinema from the continent is in focus at BIFFes, which concludes on Friday

African filmmaker Ousmane Sembène's words — 'If Africans do not tell their own stories, Africa will soon disappear' — hint at Africa's fragile position within today's geopolitics. The father of African cinema, Sembène emphasised on this sentiment throughout his career to promote authentic African storytelling against colonial narratives. "Why be a sunflower and turn towards the sun? I am myself the sun," he expressed in the documentary 'Caméra d'Afrique' (1983), which commemorated 20 years of African cinema.

This year, the Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFes) has curated a special section, 'Chronicles of Africa'. It features 13 films and documentaries made by filmmakers from across Africa.

Vinayak Bhat, chief programmer of BIFFes, says he is fascinated by the diversity of African cinema and emphasises on the importance of showing these films.

"When we curate retrospectives and special focus, it's usually Euro-centric or Southeast Asian. It's rarely focused on Africa or Latin America. So, from that point of view, it becomes important. African cinema is equally varied but it's not acknowledged," he explains. When it comes to Asian cinema, for example, a clear-cut difference between Iranian, Indian and Japanese is acknowledged. But African cinema is always put under one category, Vinayak explains. "Senegal cinema is very different from Burkinabé, which is very different from South African and so on," he adds.

'Black Girl' (1966), directed by Ousmane Sembène, was the first full length feature film from the continent. Sembène is regarded as the father of African cinema.

The films are being sourced from Alliance Française de Bangalore.

Brief history

Sembène's 'Borrom Serret' (The Wagoner) is often considered the first African film. It was made in 1963, 68 years after cinema was invented by Lumiere Brothers.

African cinema is focused on the sub-Saharan parts of the continent. The term emerged after the 1960s decolonisation of the continent and defines films by Black African filmmakers. Most African filmmakers are self taught or learned filmmaking in Europe. They emerged as pioneers by depicting their vision of the continent. These filmmakers include Oumarou Ganda (Nigerien), Djibril Diop Mambéty (Senegalese), Souleymane Cissé (Malian), Idrissa Ouédraogo (Burkinabé), Med Hondo and Safi Faye (Senegalese).

Early filmmakers explored post-colonial identity with a focus on realism, social commentary, and the tension between traditional life and modernisation. There was a need to show the realities of Africa and at the same time, a need to escape Western influence. Sembène's 'Black Girl' (1966), for example, explored a young Senegalese girl's fight for identity in France where she is reduced to a servant. It was based on a real life incident.

Mambéty's 'Touki Bouki' (1973), considered a masterpiece, explores the disillusionment of modern youth who want to escape traditional society, in search of westernisation. 'Soleil Ô' (1970), 'Saitane' (1973), 'Muna moto' (1975), 'Kaddu Beykat' (1975) are among other post-colonial narratives exploring life in different parts of Africa.

By the mid-70s, according to 'Caméra d'Afrique', filmmakers deliberately delved into the past, into the depths of African memory. They weren't satisfied with showing modern Africa, because injustices must always be exposed and truths revealed. Sembène's 'Ceddo' (1977), set in pre-colonial Senegal explored the clash of traditional African beliefs, rising Islam, and European colonialism. 'La Chapelle' (1980) and 'Wend Kuuni' (1982) are other examples.

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to dhonsat @deccanherald.co.in

Reclaiming narratives

Historically, African cinemas have faced strong competition from Western films, which shaped local audiences' tastes, spread stereotypes, and controlled how movies are distributed. At a time when cinema was used by governments for propaganda and by distributors for profit, African filmmakers were fighting for independent cinema.

According to film critic M K Raghavendra, African cinema is categorised by three currents: recreation of colonial oppression and the struggle for freedom; clash between tradition and modernity; and the condition of the immigrants in European society. Music is often used as a way to celebrate tradition, and tribal belief is treated as superstition and backward.

Martin Scorsese, through his African Film Heritage Project, is restoring and preserving African films, in partnership with the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers and UNESCO. Restored films include 'Touki Bouki', 'Soleil Ô', 'Black Girl', 'La Femme au couteau' (1969), 'Muna Moto' (1975), 'Yeelen' (1987), 'Al Momia' (1969), and 'Finye' (1982). Some of these restored films will be a part of the programme.

Vivekananda Kodandaraman, cinephile from Bengaluru, says, "African filmmakers have made films under extreme conditions which shows the diversity of their culture. Unlike cinema from other countries, very few films like 'Touki Bouki' are known to people."

With cinema being the most accessible form of art, reaching a wider audience than literature, as Sembène points out, African cinema is crucial for reclaiming the continent's narrative and challenging global stereotypes.

Djibril Diop Mambéty's 'Touki Bouki' is considered a masterpiece of African cinema and a landmark of avant-garde filmmaking.

'Yeelen' (1987), directed by Souleymane Cissé portrays pre-colonial West Africa.

The art of being always unsettled

The Padma Bhushan honour for Mammootty is a formal acknowledgement of his diverse, persuasive body of work, writes Sreenath Nair

There is something faintly deceptive about Mammootty. For an actor who has been in the cinema universe for the past five decades, he has not quite settled into the comfort that longevity usually offers. He has been sharpening his act and never has he aged into reassurance. Even now, at 74, he moves through roles the way a master card player handles a complex deck. He pulls out unexpected hands and places them down with quiet authority and dares the table to keep up.

In Kerala, his characters have escaped the screen and entered the language. A slightly challenged person is still called 'Puttu' Urumees, after his portrayal in 'Surya Manasam' (1992). Achu, the weather-beaten and solitary fisherman of 'Amaram' (1991) is not merely remembered but felt. Mammootty painfully carried the salt of the seas in his eyes. Then there is Chandu, the betrayed warrior of Malabar lore, whose shadow still looms over Malayalam cinema's moral imagination. Only a rare few actors have given names to the state of being. That is the scale of Mammootty; not stardom but saturation.

When the Padma Bhushan arrived in 2026, it felt less like recognition than a formal acknowledgement of something already settled. Mammootty, by all serious measures of the artistic, crossed that threshold of national honour long ago. Yet, what makes the award resonate is not what it crowns but what it frames: an actor who, instead of coasting on monumental legacy, has spent the last decade unsettling it.

To state a case, consider Chandu of 'Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha'. There are many moments that refuse to age. In a poignant one, Chandu walks to the sacred space in one corner of the revered Kalari. Here, honour is supposed to be restored and rituals purify betrayal. Mammootty does not rush the walk. His shoulders are squared and his eyes carry the knowledge that the verdict has been delivered. When he finally chooses death by his own hands, it is not defeat but reclamation of complete control. He does not ask for absolution but takes it. That walk is not a mere performance. It is a philosophical argument rendered through muscle, breath, and silence. That scene alone explains why Mammootty has always been elusive to categories.

Over time, critics have tried to map his career across genres such as parallel cinema, mass cinema, literary adaptations, and historicals. But Mammootty resists tidy shelves. A better way to understand him is through the scale of difficulty. It need not be a technical difficulty, but the more ethical and psychological ones. He gravitates towards roles that test the audience's willingness to stay with discomfort.

This is where the rubric matters. Psychological depth has always been Mammootty's native terrain. In 'Thaniyavarthanam', superstitions eat away at a man's sanity, not with hysteria, but with creeping inevitability. In 'Mathilukal,' desire is conveyed through voice and imagination rather than touch. In 'Vidheyan', submission becomes a form of moral corrosion. These are roles that do not seek empathy. They seek serious attention.

His emotional range, often mistaken for intensity, is actually about modulation. Mammootty knows where to withdraw. 'Peranbu' works not because of emotional outbursts but because of the long stretches where love sits unspoken, heavy, and unresolved. Restraint, in his hands, becomes the hardest performance choice of all.

Physical transformation has never been cosmetic. From the bodily awkwardness of 'Mela' to the muscular fatigue of 'Amaram', and the historical embodiment of Ambedkar, Mammootty treats the body as an argument. Posture thinks before dialogue does.

Narrative weight is another constant. Many Mammooty films would have collapsed without him. 'Mathilukal', 'Kaazcha', 'Peranbu', and 'Nanpakal Nerathu Mayakkam' are not ensemble shelters. They are acts of endurance. The camera leans on him and waits.

However, the most revealing parameter is resistance to his own public image. This is where the late-career Mammootty becomes interesting. 'Kathal the Core' asks him to play a man whose quiet life unravels under the weight of a truth he never publicly proclaims. 'Bramayugam' pushes him into the territory of myth and menace, where authority curdles into something primal. These are not roles designed to flatter legacy. They interrogate it. Thereby, Mammootty does not protect his image; he exposes it to risk.

That is also why the Padma Bhushan feels timely rather than retrospective. It marks and honours an artiste who refuses to treat experience as insulation. At an age when many actors rehearse their greatest hits, Mammootty is still learning new languages of silence, menace, tenderness, and doubt.

Kerala has produced many great actors, and India has honoured many legends. But Mammootty occupies a rarer space: an actor who understands that relevance is not about staying visible. It is about staying unsettled. And, in that space, Mammootty remains productively and stubbornly unfinished.

Mammootty

MOVIE REVIEWS

Heart-tugging account of childhood joys and sorrows

PRANATI A S

★★★½☆

Valavaara

Kannada (Theatres)

Director: Sutan Gowda

Cast: Vedic Kaushal, Sayan, Abhay, Harshitha Gowda, Malathesh

This coming-of-age drama by debutante Sutan Gowda is heartwarming and poignant.

Set in picturesque Saklespura, a coffee-growing region in Karnataka, 'Valavaara' follows Kundesi, who grapples with life as he confronts his father's blatant favouritism toward his younger brother, Kosudi. But he is the apple of his mother's eye and he loves and respects her immensely. One day, when the boys take their pregnant cow Gaura to graze, the cow wanders away. With Kosudi being their father's favourite, Kundesi must bring back the cow before his father's return.

In a hilarious encounter, he meets Yadhu (Abhay S), and the two together try to bring Gaura back. The movie follows their adventures, conversations and playfulness capturing the ingenuity, innocence, and fragile emotions of childhood. One of the conversations that stood out was how Kundesi reacts when he learns about why the village lake bears a derogatory name . The movie leaves one feeling full and warm.

Vedic Kaushal and Abhay S

Whimsical music (by Kadri Manikanth) and stunning landscapes (cinematography by Balaraja Gowda) capture the essence of the movie. Apart from the narrative, performances are the film's strength. Both Vedic Kaushal and Sayan are adorable on screen with Kaushal delivering a compelling performance as Kundesi. Harshitha Gowda and Abhay too stand out. Malathesh H V in his brief appearance as the father is convincing.

The movie does turn melodramatic towards the end with an exaggerated exploration of the mother and son relationship and the father's insecurities, which don't really add up. Nevertheless, the journey is more important than the destination.

Slow-burn that never quite ignites

AMOGH RAVINDRA

★★☆☆☆

Mayasabha

Hindi (Theatres)

Director: Rahi Anil Barve

Cast: Jaaved Jaaferi, Mohammad Samad, Veena Jamkar

When Rahi Anil Barve's 'Tumbbad' (2018) released, it barely made a ripple, only to be rediscovered years later as a cult classic. Around the same time, he directed 'Mayasabha' (yes, eight years ago), another eerie thriller circling the same obsession: what greed does to the human mind. Only this time, it is not cursed gold coins but 40 kg of gold biscuits hidden inside a crumbling theatre.

Jaaved Jaaferi plays Parmeshwar Khanna, a broke and a broken movie producer living with his son Vasu inside the decaying theatre that allegedly holds the gold. Enter Zeenat and Ravrana, the only other players in this claustrophobic drama, who arrive with plans of their own. What begins as a friendly dinner on a stormy night spirals into paranoia, suspicion, guilt, and secrets. Everyone wants something. No one is entirely honest.

Jaaferi is the film's anchor, balancing madness and vulnerability as a man undone by grief and financial ruin. The supporting cast complements him, but the real win is the atmosphere. 'Mayasabha' nails its eerie tone without spoon-feeding psychology. The visuals mirror Parmeshwar's fractured mind, and the writing keeps things contained, letting tension simmer through dialogue and silences. But the slow-burn approach is also its biggest hurdle. The narrative plateaus, the emotional graph flattens, and the tension rarely escalates. The film sits in limbo, never fully committing to being a psychological drama or a thriller.

In the end, 'Mayasabha' has flashes of intrigue, but for a dish cooked for eight years, it needed more spice.

The loudness of silence

NIKHIL WAIKER

Vijay Sethupathi and Aditi Rao Hydari

★★½☆☆

Gandhi Talks

Silent film (Theatres)

Director: Kishor Pandurang Belekar

Cast: Aditi Rao Hydari, Vijay Sethupathi, Arvind Swamy

In an industry filled with blaring clatter, 'Gandhi Talks' speaks with no dialogue!

There has been a silent 'class' wave in Tamil cinema in recent history. Pioneered by the likes of Mari Selvaraj, Vetrimaaran, and Pa Ranjith, the films investigate the ever-present divide that exists in 'classes' and 'caste'. Following within the same lines of consciousness, Kishor Pandurang Belekar's 'Gandhi Talks', designed as a formal experiment, as a film with no dialogues, the dichotomous lifestyle of the rich and the poor becomes the pulse of the film.

The story, standing on par with the zeal of the 'wave', happens to be about Mahadev (Vijay Sethupathi), an unemployed graduate, who plans a heist to break out of poverty, marry his love (Aditi Rao Hydari), help his ailing mother, and start a new life. The film is veneered with dark humour while the dread of the class rebellion simmers underneath.

Although, very simply, the attempt at such a fresh experiment with major stars is commendable, the film seems to struggle to integrate the pace and the lack of dialogues in the film. The editing doesn't adapt much to this unconventional endeavor, which further derails the poignancy of what the film is attempting to do. Silent and slow cinema depends a great deal on the acting to flesh out the vividness of the characters and the story. The film is guided emotionally and tonally by Vijay Sethupathi, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Arvind Swamy's performance and A R Rahman's music. The form seemed like it could have done more to accentuate their roles.

Although the film falls short, the audacious cinematic gamble, in a time of creative draught, needs to be celebrated.

Strong performances lift sluggish plot

RASHMI VASUDEVA

★★½☆☆

Daldal

Hindi (Prime Video)

Director: Amrit Raj Gupta

Cast: Bhumi Pednekar, Aditya Rawal, Samara Tijori

'Daldal' does not attempt to be anything other than what it is: dark, gloomy, and unsettling. The series follows DCP Rita Ferreira (Bhumi Pednekar), a police officer who appears to be as psychologically fragile as the cases she investigates, as she attempts to track down a serial killer. Based on Vish Dhamija's novel, Bhendi Bazaar, the show consciously resists the conventions of a typical cat-and-mouse thriller. Instead, it opts for a slow-burn exploration of the psychology behind violence and what drives killers to kill.

This creative resolve is also the show's biggest strength. Daldal demands patience from its viewers, asking them to trail Rita as she circles back, retraces her steps, and navigates professional rivalry and envy within the force, all the while trusting her instincts. However, the show's unrelenting bleakness becomes difficult to shake off. A moment or two of lightness might have offered much-needed contrast.

That same relentlessness also takes a toll on the pacing. What begins as measured soon turns ponderous, particularly by the fourth episode, when the narrative starts to feel weighed down by its own moodiness.

Performances, though, remain a strong point. Samara Tijori stands out with her emotional range and expressive use of her eyes. Bhumi Pednekar is restrained and controlled, but her performance stops just short of being truly compelling. Ultimately, 'Daldal' is a series with considerable promise, but one whose execution remains uneven at best.

Castee wins feature race

KOLKATA RESULTS

Vikrant-ridden Castee, trained by Satish Narredu, won the Governor's Cup, the feature event of the Calcutta races on Friday.

1. Sniper Handicap - 1600M: Power Racer (Rajender Reddy) Gaurav Singh 1; Dancing Queen (Sameer) 2; Toussaint (MS Deora) 3; Flaming Grey (Tejeshwar) 4; Wb: 5, Snk, 3-1/2L. T: 1:39.70. TB: Rajender Reddy. Fav: Toussaint.

2. Sans Pareil Handicap - 2400M: Garth (Tegbir Singh) Trevor Patel 1; Cascade (Varun) 2; Divine Gift (Mukesh Kumar) 3; Sanaya (Vaibhav) 4; Wb: Shd, Lnk, 2-1/4L. T: 2:34.72. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Garth.

3. AB & M Indian Champagne Stakes - 1400M: Saiko (Vikram Bachhawat) Trevor Patel 1; Admiringly (Mukesh Kumar) 2; Dreamflight (MS Deora) 3; Starliner (J.H.Arul) 4; Wb: 2, 5, Dist. 1-25.86. TB: Vijay Singh. Fav: Saiko.

4. Governor's Cup - 1600M: Casteel (Balam Mohla) Vikrant; King Louis (Vishal Bunde) 2; Raffaello (Vinod Shinde) 3; Vincent Van Gogh (Gaurav Singh) 4; Wb: 1/2, 1/2, 2-1/2L. T: 1:37.18. TB: Satish Narredu. Fav: Glorious King.

5. Castlebridge Handicap - 1200M: Pantazi (Menak Gupta) Trevor Patel 1; Aperol (Gaurav Singh) 2; Romping Home (Hindu Singh) 3; Abhicandra (M.S.Deora) 4; Not Run: Star Concept. Wb: 3-1/2, 1/2, 1/2L. T: 1:11.61. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Pantazi.

6. Awesome One Handicap (Div-I) - 1200M: Oishika (Vikram Bachhawat) Trevor Patel 1; Chililady (M.S.Deora) 2; Impressive Annie (R.S.Bhati) 3; Blue God (Gaurav Singh) 4; Wb: 1-1/2, 1-3/4, 3/4L. T: 1:12.57. TB: Shyam Habbu. Fav: Conjurer.

7. Awesome One Handicap (Div-II) - 1200M: Jimmy Bee (Rafiullah Khan) Vishal Bunde 1; Cat Whiskers (Vaibhav) 2; Tycoonist (Sameer) 3; Trillionaire (V. Jaiswal) 4; Wb: 2, 3, 1L. T: 1:12.61. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: Cat Whiskers.

Bengaluru Dividends

I race: Rs 38w; 13, 18, 12p; Fc: Rs 370; Q: Rs 209; Shp: Rs 44; Thp: Rs 52; Tri: Rs 463 & 106; Ex: Rs 2,468 & 1,480.

II race: Rs 17w; 13, 22, 15p; Fc: Rs 106; Q: Rs 56; Shp: Rs 75; Thp: Rs 36; Tri: Rs 467 & 129; Ex: Rs 942 & 290.

III race: Rs 13w; 11, 10p; Fc: Rs 37; Q: Rs 16; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 24; Tri: Rs 44 & 13;

IV race: Rs 104w; 22, 11, 24p; Fc: Rs 1,042; Q: Rs 391; Shp: Rs 39; Thp: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 2,886 & 2,968; Ex: Rs 41,901 & 17,957.

V race: Rs 17w; 12, 15, 16p; Fc: Rs 65; Q: Rs 41; Shp: Rs 47; Thp: Rs 47; Tri: Rs 102 & 41; Ex: Rs 201 & 109.

VI race: Rs 31w; 14, 92, 21p; Fc: Rs 679; Q: Rs 617; Shp: Rs 174; Thp: Rs 43; Tri: Rs 4,135 & 1,097; Ex: Rs 43,671 (c/o) & 18,716.

VII race: Rs 24w; 14, 13, 67p; Fc: Rs 74; Q: Rs 35; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 92; Tri: Rs 1,986 & 1,210; Ex: Rs 25,277 & 8,666.

Jackpot: Rs 4,158 (111). **Runner-up:** Rs 496 (199). **I treble:** Rs 642 (93). **II treble:** Rs 152 (813).

Time And Tide favourite for Sprinters' Championship

MUMBAI SELECTIONS

Adhirajsingh Jodha-trained Time And Tide, who has been unteaten in the last six starts, is the favourite for the Dr SC Jain Sprinters' Championship, the feature event of the Mumbai races on Saturday.

Races start at 2:30 pm onwards.

1. Forest Flair Trophy - 1000M: Ekla Cholo 1, Between Friends 2, Moment Of Madness 3.

2. Enigma Trophy - 1600M: Matisse 1, Zafferano 2, Black Thunder 3.

3. Dancing Prances Trophy - 1000M: Gunfire 1, Ghost Of Victory 2, Spectra 3.

4. Oyster Cove Trophy - 2400M: Ekatarina 1, Diego Garcia 2, Little John 3.

5. Dr SC Jain Sprinter's Championship - 1200M: Time And Tide 1, Shambala 2, Miss American Pie 3.

6. Weizhou Trophy - 1600M: Algonquin 1, Whisper 2, Magical Moment 3.

7. Captain Courage Trophy - 1200M: Skandha 1, Jaislmer 2, Esteban 3.

Day's best: Algonquin. Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. **Treble:** 4, 5 & 6.

Sushir wins Cat A title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Sushir of Prose Ede Academy won the Category A title by one-shot after carding 74 in the 11th Annual Inter-School Junior Golf Tournament, hosted by Canadian International School at Prestige Golfshire.

Prose Ede Academy also won the overall school championship.

Results: Cat A: Sushir (Prose Edu Academy) 74, 1; Nilofer (Prose Edu Academy) 75, 2.

Cat B: Anirvin (Canadian International School) 78, 1; Prana (Canadian International School), 93, 2.

Cat C: Adit (Vidyashilp Academy) 73, 1; Bavin (Legacy School Bangalore) 79, 2.

Cat D: Ruslaan (Greenwood High International School) 82, 1; Jaasritha (Greenwood High International School, Bannerghatta) 85, 2;

Cat E: Ridhaan (AIRAA Academy) 31, 1; Shinav (Greenwood High International School, Sarjapura) 36, 2.

Overall winner: Prose Edu Academy.

TENNIS AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Vintage Djoker bins Sinner

Serbian wins epic semifinal to set up Alcaraz clash in final

MELBOURNE, AFP

Novak Djokovic stunned reigning champion Jannik Sinner early on Saturday to set up a blockbuster Australian Open final with Carlos Alcaraz after the Spaniard survived a five-set clash of his own with Alexander Zverev.

The 38-year-old Serbian great turned back the clock to keep alive his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam crown by upsetting the Italian 3-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 in a gruelling 4hrs 9mins on Rod Laver Arena.

World No. 1 Alcaraz needed even longer to tame Zverev, spending a titanic 5hrs 27mins on court, overcoming cramping and a fifth-set deficit to win 6-4, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 6-7 (4/7), 7-5.

"I'm lost for words right now, to be honest," said Djokovic, who dropped to his knees and was emotional when the match ended. "It feels surreal."

Djokovic had lost his last five encounters with Sinner and thanked him for "allowing me at least one win in the last couple of years".

"I have tremendous respect for him, he pushed me to the limit," he added.

"The level of intensity, and I guess the quality of tennis, was extremely high, and I knew that was the only way for me to have a chance to win tonight."

The win propelled Djokovic into a 39th Grand Slam final and made him the oldest man in the Open era to reach the title match in Melbourne, where he has won 10 times.

It will be his first finals appearance since Wimbledon in 2024.

Djokovic has been trying to move past Margaret Court -- who was in the stadium watching -- and clinch a landmark 25th major since his last one at the US Open in 2023.

It has proved increasingly difficult with the emergence of Sinner and Alcaraz, who have shared every Slam title since then.

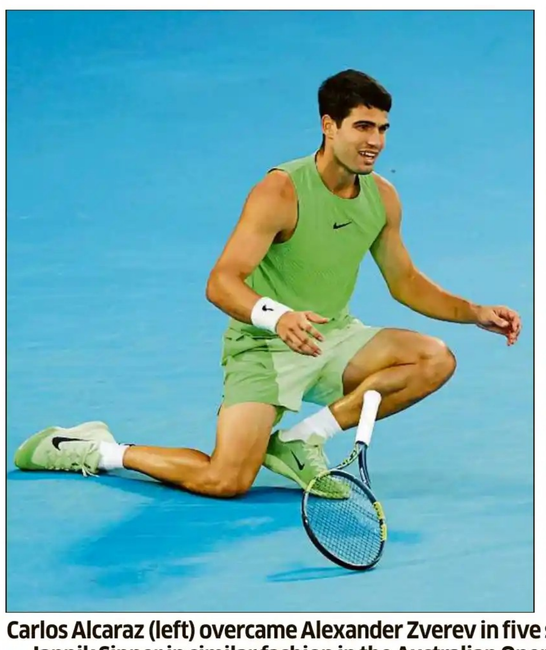
Against Zverev, Alcaraz only narrowly avoided crashing out after a huge fright at 4-4 in the third set when he pulled up in pain with what appeared to be cramp.

He was allowed to have treatment at the changeover, leaving Zverev furious and angrily remonstrating with officials.

Medical timeouts are not permitted solely for muscle cramping and Zverev made his feelings clear, swearing at officials.

Alcaraz said afterwards he thought he might have hurt his right abductor and it was the physio who decided to have a timeout.

Results: Men's semifinal: 1-Carlos Alcaraz (Esp) bt 3-Alexander Zverev (Ger) 6-4, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 6-7 (4/7), 7-5; 4-Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt 2-Jannik Sinner (Ita) 3-6, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.



Carlos Alcaraz (left) overcame Alexander Zverev in five sets while Novak Djokovic (right) beat Jannik Sinner in similar fashion in the Australian Open semifinals on Friday. REUTERS PHOTOS

Sabalenka, Rybakina in battle of firepower

MELBOURNE, AFP: Fire meets fire when hard-hitting Aryna Sabalenka clashes with big-serving Elena Rybakina in the women's Australian Open final on Saturday.

The showdown pits two players who are on rampaging form and yet to drop a set in Melbourne in the past fortnight.

They know each other very well, having met 14 times previously, and it is a rematch of the 2023 title decider at Rod Laver Arena.

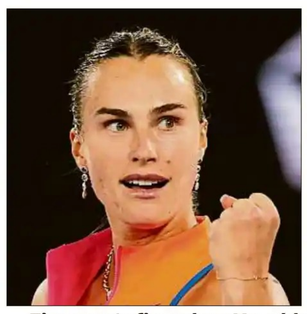
The Belarusian Sabalenka prevailed on that occasion, fighting back from a set down to win her first Grand Slam crown.

The world number one won it again in 2024, but was denied a hat-trick last year when she was stunned in the final by the American Madison Keys.

The meeting with the Kazakh Rybakina will be her fourth Melbourne final in a row, and she is expecting an almighty tussle.

Sabalenka goes into the final in scintillating form, having won all of her 11 matches in 2026 without dropping a set.

Rybakina lost in the quarterfinals in Brisbane, but that is her only defeat in 14 matches.



Fire meets fire when Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina (right) takes on Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka in a mouth-watering women's singles final on Saturday. AFP/ REUTERS

Devika stuns Supanida to enter SF

BANGKOK, PTI

India's Devika Sihag pulled off a big upset at the Thailand Masters Super 300 badminton tournament, stunning home favourite and top seed Supanida Katethong in straight games to reach the women's singles semifinals here on Friday.

The 20-year-old unseeded Indian, who claimed her maiden BWF International Challenge title at the Malaysia International last year, kept her composure to seal a 21-19, 21-18 victory in the quarterfinals that lasted just 40 minutes.

The world No. 63 will face fifth seed Huang Yu-Hsun of Chinese Taipei next.

In another women's singles quarterfinal, Isharani fought hard but bowed out after losing 18-21, 21-16, 21-13 to Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching.

India's challenge in the men's singles ended at the quarterfinal stage after Tharun Mannepalli went down 11-21, 17-21 to China's Zhu Xuan Chen.

Devika Sihag

Devika has been steadily building momentum on the circuit. In August 2025, she won Malaysia International, beating compatriot Isharani Baruah in the final.

She was also part of the Indian mixed team that won a bronze medal at the 2025 World University Games.

Last season, Devika finished runner-up at the Indonesia Masters Super 100 and reached four finals in 2024.

Vijay surges into lead after round 2

BENGALURU, DHNS: Vijay Punjabi **(in pic)** surged into the lead at the end of round 2 of the ongoing Karnataka State Tenpin Bowling Championship underway for Men at Church Street here.

Vijay Punjabi delivered a commanding performance in his first block of six games in round 2, which is played on long oil conditions, scoring a total pinfall of 1264 at an average of 210.7.

Maintaining his consistency, he followed up with 1192 pins in the second block of 6 games played on medium oil conditions. At the end of Round 2, he topped the standings with a cumulative pinfall of 4,821 over 24 games, at an average of 200.88.

Akaash Ashok Kumar posted scores of 1172 and 1119 in his two blocks of 6 games, finishing Round 2 with a total pinfall of 4736 after 24 games, placing him second overall and 85 pins behind leader Vijay Punjabi.

Shanmugananda (4524 pins) and Parvez Ahmed (4469 pins) are in 3rd and 4th positions respectively.

Fulton offered to resign defending Manpreet

NEW DELHI, PTI

Veteran mid-fielder Manpreet Singh's omission from India's core hockey probables on disciplinary grounds was vehemently opposed by chief coach Craig Fulton, who had threatened to resign before being persuaded to continue by Hockey India, a well-placed source told on Friday.

It is reliably learnt that Fulton considered the push to sack Manpreet from the February 1 to 7 camp for 33 core probables in Rourkela as "external interference".

The two-time Olympic bronze-medallist was dropped from core probables for the first time in 15 years after it came to light that he had indulged in the abuse of a recreational drug during the tour of South Africa in December last year.

In the meeting to decide the probables, Fulton was left "disturbed" after Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey, secretary general Bhola Nath Singh and chief selector RP Singh collectively conveyed that Manpreet ought to be omitted.

"Fulton argued from the point of Manpreet being a mentor to younger players. But on that, Dilip said players will learn from other seniors. A few players were unhappy with the way HI behaved with Manpreet," the source said.

A livid Fulton offered to quit a day after the Chennai leg of the recently-concluded HIL. However, after much persuasion from Tirkey, he agreed to follow the official line that the experienced player was being "rested"

Craig Fulton

The source said that Fulton argued to keep Manpreet in the core group and relied on the his impeccable fitness.

'Sought rest'

Meanwhile Manpreet on Friday said he had sought some time away from the sport to rest and spend time with family, dismissing speculation that he was dropped on disciplinary grounds.

Manpreet took to social media on Friday to clarify that the decision was taken to allow him time off to re-energise.

"Since the Paris Olympics, it's been non-stop hockey for me. Back-to-back tournaments, across Asia, Europe, Australia and South Africa," Manpreet wrote on 'X'.

"Last year, my wife Illi and I were blessed with my second baby girl. With all the camps and tournaments lined up one after another...

"After a fantastic HIL, where my team Ranchi Royals played d final, Coach spoke to me & informed of his decision to allow me this much-needed rest."

Forest, Celtic into play-offs as Villa fight back

PARIS, AFP: Nottingham Forest will go into the Europa League play-off round after a 4-0 win over Ferencvaros on Thursday, while Celtic secured their place in the knockout phase with victory over Utrecht.

Aston Villa finished second in the league phase after recovering from two goals down to beat Red Bull Salzburg 3-2 with their spot in the last 16 already assured.

Forest stood an outside chance of climbing into the top eight going into the final round of matches but needed to beat Robbie Keane's Ferencvaros and rely on other results going their way.

Results: Porto: 3 (Mora 27th, Moura 36th, Fernandez 41st-og) bt Rangers: 1 (Gassama 6th); Lille: 1 bt (Giroud 90th+2-pen) bt Freiburg: 0; Real Betis: 2 (Antony 17th, Ezzalzouli 32nd) bt Feyenoord: 1 (Tengstedt 77th); Aston Villa: 3 (Rogers 64th, Mings 76th, Jimoh-Aloba 87th) lt to Red Bull Salzburg: 2 (Konate 33rd, Yeo 49th); Red Star Belgrade: 1 (Duarte 89th) drew with Celta Vigo: 1 (Lopez 87th); Lyon: 4 (Himbert 33rd, Merah 55th, Karabec 88th, Rodriguez 90th+3) bt PAOK: 2 (Giakoumakis 20th, Meite 66th); Celtic: 4 (Nygren 6th, Viergever 10th OG, Engels 19th, Trusty 66th) bt Utrecht: 2 (De Wit 44th, Blake 62nd); Maccabi Tel Aviv: 0 lt to Bologna: 3 (Rowe 35th, Orsolini 47th, Pobega 90th+4); Basel: 0 lt to Viktoria Plzen: 1 (Panos 39th); Midtjylland: 2 bt (Simsir 49th, Jensen 74th) bt Dinamo Zagreb: 0; Ludogorets: 1 bt (Stanic 42nd) bt Nice: 0; Nottingham Forest: 4 (Otvos 17th OG, Jesus 21st, 55th, McAtee 90th) bt Ferencvaros: 0; Sturm Graz: 1 (Kiteishvili 85th) bt Brann: 0; FCSB: 1 (Cisotti 71st) drew with Fenerbahce: 1 (Yuksek 19th); Stuttgart: 3 (Undav 6th, Demirovic 7th, Andres 90th) bt Young Boys: 2 (Gigovic 42nd, Lauper 57th); Panathinaikos: 1 (Taborda 58th) drew with Roma: 1 (Ziolkowski 80th); Go Ahead Eagles: 0 drew with Braga: 0; Genk: 2 (Heymans 45th, Karetsas 82nd) bt Malmo: 1 (Ali 4th).

Real play Benfica as PSG face Monaco in CL play-offs

PARIS, AFP: Real Madrid were handed a quick rematch with Jose Mourinho's Benfica in the draw for the Champions League play-off round on Friday, while reigning European champions Paris Saint-Germain will face domestic rivals Monaco.

Benfica beat Real 4-2 in their final game of the league phase on Wednesday, with a 98th-minute goal by goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin proving decisive in allowing the Portuguese side to snatch the last play-off spot ahead of Marseille, who were eliminated altogether.

EUROPA LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS DRAW

- Dinamo Zagreb v Genk
- Ludogorets Razgrad v Ferencvaros
- Celtic v VfB Stuttgart
- Brann v Bologna
- Panathinaikos v Viktoria Plzen
- PAOK v Celta Vigo
- Fenerbahce v Nottingham Forest
- Lille v Red Star Belgrade

The defeat also nudged Madrid out of the top eight places in the league standings, which give direct access to the last 16, forcing them into this extra round.

Benfica staged a remarkable recovery to take a play-off place -- they finished 24th in the 36-team league phase, the last qualifying spot -- by winning three of their last four matches after losing their opening four games.

PSG slipped out of the top eight after winning only one of their last five outings in the league phase and finishing in 11th place.

They will go to Monaco for the first leg and will be wary of the principality side who beat them there in Ligue 1 in November.

Elsewhere, Newcastle United will be strong favourites against surprise packages Qarabag of Azerbaijan, with the first leg to come in Baku.

PSG and Newcastle know that if they win, they will play either Barcelona or Chelsea in the last 16. Real's possible last-16 opponents are Manchester City or Sporting, which would mean yet another trip to Lisbon in the latter case.

Government of Karnataka
Office of The Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Haveri
Email : eeprednhvr@gmail.com Tel. No: 08375-232454
This office letter No. 39/EE/PREDn/HVR/PB-1/Tender/2025-26/6415 Dated : 28-01-2026

E-Tender Notification

On 28-01-2026 through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Tender Notification has been issued for the following work Indent No. 23376 (Cat-1), 23257, 23441 (Cat 2A), 20480, 23717, 23672 (SC), 23719, 23675, 23556 & 23683 Last date for submission of tender receipt is assigned on Dated : **04-02-2026** (up to 4:00 PM). For further additional information, any changes & queries please visit http://www.kppp.karnatak.gov.in.

DIPR/HVR/KSMCA/665/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
P.R.E. Division, Haveri

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: 908/BKT/SEE/AEE(C)Tr(Projects)/25-26/4520-30 Date:30.01.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

KPTCL invites Bids for the following work.

KPTCL/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT3229 for Providing Area fencing to the KPTCL of proposed 110/11kV sub-station Kunibenchi. The Bids will be received through electronic tender mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the E-tendering process can be obtained by logging into (KPP) Portal website: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 31.01.2026 at 5.30 P.M.** Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Superidenting Engineer (El.,), Transmission (Projects) Circle, Zonal Office Premises, Opp.Sector No.45, KPTCL, Navanagara, Bagalakote

HUBLI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly owned Govt. of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN: U31401KA2002SGC030437)
Zonal Office, ShivagangaLayout,Keshwapur,
Vijayapura Road, Hubballi–580023
Ph: 0836-2364320E-mail ID:ceehbl.hescom@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಹುವಿಸಕಂನಿ.ವ್ಯನಿ/ಪ್ರವ್ಯ/(ಆ&ಮಾಸಂಅ)/ಸಸಾಸ/ಸ/ಪಿಎಲ್ಓ.672/18–19/2025–26/22520–21 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29–01–2026

Tender Notification

(Karnataka Public Procurement Portalonly)

Chief Engineer (Electy.), O & M Zone, HESCOM, Hubballi invites following Service tenders through "Karnataka Public Procurement Portal".

Type of Services (CALL-2)

For awarding Feeder Franchisees to feeders, of Sirsi Circle in Uttar Kannada District.

Targod, Bisalkoppa, Chipagi, Malagaon, Vaddala, Bankanala, Ramapura, santolli, Boranagudda, Ummadi, Isluru, Dasanakoppa, Dodnalli, Devanahalli, Sampakanda, Salkani, Hulekal, vanalli, Dhorangiri, Banavasi, Bhashi, Tigani, Sugavi, Andagi, Bachgaon, Bachanaki, Amadalli, Siddar, ITI Road Kinnar, Kerawadi, Shirawada, Industrial, Sadashivagad, Majali,Asnoti, Halaga, Honkon, Kurnipet, Rural Kadra, Kadasollli, Agragon, Belekeri, Vadafone, Tonka, Manki, Devaragadde, Kota, Manki Town, Koppa, Ballor, Banasale, Salkod, Kadle, Chandavar, Kelaginuur, Idagunji, Chittar, Hamakki, Adikekuli, Hadinabal, Mavinakurva, Subramanya, Karki, Balkur, Magod, Left, Right, Colony, Upponi, Madangeri, Tadadi, Katagal, Mirjan, Hegade, Chittaragi, Murooru, Kallabbe, Santeguli, Ullurmatha, Hodake Shirur, Koojalli, Valagalli, Dhareshwar, Bada, Masur, Gokarna, Bijjur, OOM Beach, Bankikodla, Gangavali, Alwekode, Belake, Marukere, Urbal BF-1, Bandikashi, Shirali, Murdeshwar, Koppa, Bailur, Neerakantha, Tenginagundi, SemiUrban, Jali, Industrial BF-7 (Sagar Road)

• For further details please visit the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
• For any clarification please contact this office during office hours.

Sd/- Chief Engineer(Electy.), O & M Zone, HESCOM, Hubballi.

DIPR/Dharwad/1164/Manipal/2025-26

Don't Miss
Tomorrow's DH on Sunday

DH DECCAN HERALD

BIG PICTURE — Inside the longevity debate.
BOOKS — Kiran Desai on the 'AI parasite'.
ART & PURSUITS — How to start and sustain a garden.
WELLNESS — The perils of positivity.
TRAVEL — Your 48-hour guide to Istanbul.
FOOD & DRINK — Sourdough pizza's reshaping cafe experiences.

Follow Us

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳ ನಿಯಮಿತ
ನಂ.4, ಪಂಪಮಹಾಕವಿ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಚಾಮರಾಜಪೇಟೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು – 560 018
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ ಐಡಿ: ksccfltd1964@gmail.com
ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಕರಾಸಗ್ರಾಮ/ಆಡಳಿತ/ನೇ.ನೇ/01/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 30.01.2026

ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಮಹಾಮಂಡಳ (ನಿ)., ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ 34 ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ನೇರ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಗಾಗಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09.01.2026 ರಂದು ಕನ್ನಡಪ್ರಭ ಮತ್ತು Deccan Herald ದಿನ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಿ, ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶದನ್ವಯ 03 (ಮೂರು) ವರ್ಷಗಳ ವಯೋಮಿತಿ ಸಡಿಲಿಕೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಸಿಆಸುಇ **262 ಸೇನೆನಿ 2025 ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು, ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29.01.2026** ರನ್ವಯ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಪ್ರವರ್ಗಗಳ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ 03 (ಮೂರು) ವರ್ಷಗಳ ವಯೋಮಿತಿ ಸಡಿಲಿಕೆ ನೀಡುವ ಬದಲಿಗೆ 05 (ಐದು) ವರ್ಷಗಳ ವಯೋಮಿತಿ ಸಡಿಲಿಕೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕವನ್ನು **07.02.2026** ರಿಂದ **15.02.2026** ರವರೆಗೆ ವಿಸ್ತರಿಸಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು **https://virtualofficeerp.com/ksccf2026**ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department. Office of the Executive Engineer Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal. Phone & Fax No : 08539-220054 email: eemidnkst@rediffmail.com

No:EE/MI&GWDD/Koppal/PB/TP/2025-26/4973
Dated:30/01/2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal district invites tenders from the eligible tenderers registered civil contractors as per standard bid documents KW-4 on KPP portal for 6 no. of tender works pertaining to Koppal district & Raichur district The Approximate amount for the mentioned works Ranges between Rs.480.00 Lakhs to 2100.00 Lakhs. Two cover tender procedure as per rule 28 of the KTTP act shall be followed.

For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours and all information regarding tenders can be had from website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address on or after 04-02-2026. Last date & time for receipt of tender is 21-02-2026 time 17.30 hours, Pre bid meeting will be held on 11-02-2026, 11.00 Hours at division office koppal, Date & time for opening of technical bid 23-02-2026 time 11.00 hours, date and time for opening of financial bid 25-02-2026 time 11.00 hours (If technical bid sanction is accorded by the competent authority).

Sd/-Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Department Division Koppal.

DIPR/Koppal/645/KSMCA/2025-26

Quinton de Kock

Proteas clinch T20 series vs WI

CENTURION, AFP: Quinton de Kock used a borrowed bat to hammer a series-clinching century for South Africa in the second T20I against the West Indies at SuperSport Park on Thursday.

West Indies posted an imposing 221/4 in their 20 overs but De Kock was in imperious form as South Africa won by seven wickets and 15 balls to spare.

Brief scores: West Indies: 221/4 in 20 overs (Shimron Hetmyer 75, Sherfane Rutherford 57 (n.o.), Brandon King 49; Keshav Maharaj 2-22) lt to South Africa: 225/3 in 17.3 overs (Quinton de Kock 115, Ryan Rickelton 77 (n.o.); Akeal Hosein 2-41). **Result:** South Africa won by 7 wkts. **Series:** SA lead the 3-match series 2-0. **PoM:** Quinton de Kock.

IN BRIEF

Rukshana, Subhathra score 5 each

▶ Rukshana and Subhathra A pumped in five goals each as Karnataka walloped Puducherry 13-0 in the U-13 South Zone Qualifying tournament for the Asmita Khelo India event at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Friday, reports DHNS.

Result: Karnataka: 13 (Rukshana 9th, 19th, 25th, 33rd, 44th, Subhathra A 13th, 21st, 22nd, 29th, 45th, Anya Sexena 16th, Richa Bhatia 38th, 50th) bt Puducherry: 0.

KSCA picks zonal chairmen

▶ Karnataka State Cricket Association on Friday has appointed chairmen for six zones in the state during the association's Managing Committee meeting, reports DHNS.

Zonal chairmen: Prakash LM (Tumkur), Ravindra T (Mysore), Nagendra K Pandit (Shimoga), Altaf Nawaz M Kittur (Dharwad), Dr Srikanth Rai (Mangalore), Chandrashekar Mailar (Raichur).

Veer, Anahat advance

▶ India's Veer Chotrani stunned French world No. 19 Baptiste Masotti in a five-game thriller to secure a place in the quarterfinal, while compatriot Velavan Senthilkumar went down to second seeded Mexican Leonel Cardenas at the Squash on Fire Open in Washington, reports PTI from New Delhi.

In the women's section, seventh seed Anahat Singh beat South African Hayley Ward 11-5, 11-8, 12-14, 11-5 in the second round.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

5th T20I: India vs New Zealand **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1**, **JioHotstar**.

3rd T20I: South Africa vs West Indies **(9:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 2**, **JioHotstar**.

U-19 WC: Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe **(super six, 1 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 2**, **JioHotstar**.

Ranji Trophy: Punjab vs Karnataka, Haryana vs Bengal, Mumbai vs Delhi **(day 3, all 9:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Khel**, **JioHotstar**.

BADMINTON

Thailand Masters: Semifinals **(10:30 AM)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar**.

FOOTBALL

EPL: Leeds United vs Arsenal **(8:30 pm)**, Chelsea vs West Ham **(11 pm)**, Liverpool vs Newcastle **(1:30 am, Sunday)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

La Liga: Osasuna vs Villarreal **(8:45 pm)**, Levante vs Atletico Madrid **(11 pm)**, Elche vs Barcelona **(1:30 am, Sunday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

TENNIS

Australian Open: Women's final **(2 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **SonyLIV**.

CRICKET FIFTH T20

Time to lay the finishing touches

India hope to address Samson's form & Axar's fitness concerns

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PTI

Sanju Samson would expect passionate home support to lift his game even as India fret over Axar Patel's fitness when they wind up their T20 World Cup preparations in the fifth and final T20 International against New Zealand here on Saturday.

India were in experimental mode in the fourth T20I at Visakhapatnam, sticking to five front-line bowlers without resorting to all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube. The plan didn't yield the desired result as the hosts lost even though the result does not alter the series outcome, which India has already sealed.

As has been the case through this series, the bowling department might see some shake-up again and the management could give a chance to mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy after resting him from the previous two matches.

The batting department might not see too many changes, but the management will keep an eye on Samson. A free-flowing batsman, Samson now appears to be holding the weight of the world on his shoulders.

More than the drying up of runs, the think-tank will be worried about technical discrepancies that have crept into his batting of late, and the subsequent draining of confidence. A laden back-foot, and improper bat swing might require some deep correction ahead of the ICC showpiece starting February 7.

Since Samson is a contender for the pivotal opening slot at the marquee event, the lean patch cannot be allowed to enter a terminal phase.

But in his home town, backed by adoring fans, Samson might just find the lost rhythm.

That he is a superstar in this part of the country was evident from a video that the BCCI shared after the team's arrival.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav was seen playfully clearing the way for 'Chetta' (elder brother) at the airport exit where hundreds of fans had lined up to catch the glimpse of the local favourite and his team-mates.

Ishan Kishan is a crucial backup option for Samson and has been in fine fettle in this rubber, but the wicketkeeper batter had to sit out of the previous match with an unspecified injury.

All-rounder Axar too has not played since suffering a finger injury in the first T20I at Nagpur. The left-arm spinner, though, had bowled a few deliveries at nets ahead of the fourth match in Visakhapatnam.

Beyond the individual scenarios, there are team goals to be achieved. In modern cricket, turnaround time between matches or series is quite tight, and India will play their first game of the T20 World Cup on February 7 in Mumbai.

So, by any stretch of imagination, India will not be treating this as a dead rubber. A dominant 4-1 margin will further enhance the confidence of a team brimming with style, strength and depth.

That is precisely what the Kiwis would not want happening.

They looked clueless against India's onslaught in the first three matches, but found a way to silence the hosts' big guns at Visakhapatnam.

Once they took out Abhishek Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav, the visiting bowlers were able to contain the rest of the batting unit despite Shivam Dube's blitz.

They now know that this Indian side is not exactly invincible and a 3-2 margin will keep them in a happy mental space ahead of imminent bigger assignments. The Greenfield Stadium is a high-scoring venue with a smooth pitch, and India have won three out of their four T20 matches played here, including one against New Zealand in 2017. But as skipper Mitchell Santner put it, the Kiwis now know what it takes to beat India, and it should lead to a fascinating contest.

An out-of-sorts Sanju Samson will hope to regain his form in front of home fans when India take on New Zealand in the final T20I in Thiruvananthapuram. PTI

LIVE 7:00 PM, STAR SPORTS

Fourth T20 WC for umpire Menon, Padmanabhan to debut

DUBAI, PTI: Elite Panel umpire Nitin Menon **(in pic)** will officiate in his fourth T20 World Cup, while fellow Indian Anantha Padmanabhan will make his debut in the ICC event beginning in India and Sri Lanka from February 7.

Menon, the only Indian in the ICC Elite Panel, had earlier officiated in the 2021, 2022 and 2024 editions of the T20 World Cup.

The third Indian in the list for match officials announced on Friday is J Madanagopal who would be taking part in his second T20 showpiece.

On the opening day of the competition, Menon and Sam Nogajski will be in the middle for the Group C clash between Scotland and the West Indies.

In all, 24 officials will be on-field umpires during the group stage, with Richard Kettleborough, Ahsan Raza, Langton Rusere and Adrian Holdstock among the other returnees.

Match Officials at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

Match Referees: Dean Cosker, David Gilbert, Ranjan Madugalle, Andrew Pycroft, Richie Richardson and Javagal Srinath.

Umpires: Roland Black, Chris Brown, Kumar Dharmasena, Chris Gaffaney, Adrian Holdstock, Richard Illingworth, Richard Kettleborough, Wayne Knights, Donovan Koch, Jayaraman Madanagopal, Nitin Menon, Sam Nogajski, KNA Padmanabhan, Allahuddien Paleker, Ahsan Raza, Leslie Reifer, Paul Reiffel, Langton Rusere, Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, Gazi Sohel, Rodney Tucker, Alex Wharf, Raveendra Wimalasiri and Asif Yaqoob.

Giants punch Eliminator ticket

Harmanpreet blitz in vain as GG script 11-run victory

VADODARA, PTI

Skipper Ashleigh Gardner and Georgia Wareham starred with bat and ball as Gujarat Giants finally broke their jinx against defending champions Mumbai Indians with an 11-run victory to seal a spot in the Women's Premier League Eliminator here on Friday.

Gardner smashed a counter-punching 46 off 28 balls and Wareham struck a brisk 44 from 26 as the duo stitched together a crucial 71-run stand to rescue Gujarat from a mid-innings slump and lift them to a competitive 167 for 4 after opting to bat.

Chasing 168 on a tricky surface in a high-pressure contest proved challenging for Mumbai Indians, who were restricted to 156/7 despite skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's valiant unbeaten 82 off 48 balls (8x4, 4x6).

It was Gujarat's first win over the reigning champions after eight successive defeats and could not have come at a better time, securing their place in Tuesday's Eliminator.

Mumbai's fate will be decided on Sunday when Delhi Capitals take on UP Warriorz in the final league match. A Delhi win will confirm their Eliminator berth, while a victory for bottom-placed UP Warriorz could open the door for Mumbai.

Georgia Wareham

UPW, who have the worst net run rate of -1.146, still have an outside chance but would need a massive win to overhaul MI's run rate of 0.146.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru have already booked a direct place in the final after topping the five-team standings with six wins from eight matches.

Mumbai endured a poor start as Sophie Devine (2/23) cleaned up Hayley Matthews (6) with a delivery that stayed low in her opening over and then dismissed Nat Sciver-Brunt (2), with Anushka Sharma taking a fine catch near the deep square-leg boundary.

Brief scores: Gujarat Giants: 167/4 in 20 overs (Sophie Devine 25, Anushka Sharma 33, Ashleigh Gardner 46, Georgia Wareham 44 n.o.; Amelia Kerr 2-26) bt Mumbai Indians: 156/7 in 20 overs (Sajeevan Sajana 26, Harmanpreet Kaur 82 n.o.; Sophie Devine 2-23, Georgia Wareham 2-26). **PoM:** Georgia Wareham.

Women's Premier League Points Table

Teams	P	W	L	NRR	Pts
RCB (Q)	8	**6**	**2**	+1.247	**12**
GG (Q)	8	**5**	**3**	-0.168	**10**
MI	8	**3**	**5**	+0.059	**6**
DC	7	**3**	**4**	-0.164	**6**
UPW	7	**2**	**5**	-1.146	**4**

Middle-order collapse jolts K'taka

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka suffered a middle-order implosion that has left their bid for an outright win against Punjab in the balance at the halfway stage of their Elite Group B Ranji Trophy encounter in Mohali on Friday.

After bowling out Punjab for 309 for the addition of just five runs in the morning, Karnataka looked on course to batter the hosts through openers KL Rahul (59, 87b) and Mayank Agarwal (46, 64b) but inexplicably lost their way thereafter to be placed at a concerning 255/6 in 87 overs at the IS Bindra Stadium.

Now needing nothing less than a win to stay alive considering quarterfinal-chasing teams Madhya Pradesh and Saurashtra appear heading towards victory in their respective clashes, Karnataka made a confident start through Rahul and under-fire Agarwal.

The two close friends turned the clock back in their 102-run stand off 129 balls as they batted in fourth gear without much discomfort. But the moment Agarwal, who was stripped of captaincy following the chastening defeat against Madhya Pradesh in the previous clash, departed in the 22nd over, Karnataka batting just fell apart -- something that has happened frequently in recent times.

They lost four wickets for 64 runs to be reeling at 166/5, new captain and the in-form Devdutt Padikkal and R Smaran, the standout player in the opening leg of the tournament, departing for identical scores of 9. Both the batters were victims of the impressive Harpreet Brar, the left-arm spinner emerging as the wrecker-in-chief with his 4/101.

KL Rahul top-scored for Karnataka with 59 off 87 balls against Punjab in Mohali on Friday. PTI FILE PHOTO

Veteran spinning all-rounder Shreyas Gopal, however, once again bailed out Karnataka from trouble with a gritty 42 not out off 124 balls. The right-hander first forged a 47-run stand for the sixth wicket with debutant wicket-keeper Kruthik Krishna (28) before sharing a unbeaten 42-run alliance with pacer Vidyadhar Patil (23 n.o.).

Trailing by 54 runs, Karnataka are still not out of the woods and they'll be banking on their Man Friday Shreyas to do all the heavy lifting.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB (I Innings, O/n: 303/9): Abhijeet Garg c Rahul b Shreyas 81 (133b, 8x4, 2x6), Prabhsimran Singh c Shetty b Patil 5 (8b, 1x4), Uday Saharan c Rahul b Mohsin 44 (72b, 6x4, 1x6), Jashanpreet Singh c Mohsin b Shreyas 6 (16b, 1x4), Anmolpreet Singh b Shreyas 0 (1b), Anmol Malhotra c Kruthik b Patil 25 (46b, 2x4, 1x6), Emanjot Singh Chahal c Padikkal b Patil 83 (140b, 9x4, 1x6), Ayush Goyal st Kruthik b Mohsin 23 (82b, 2x4), Harpreet Brar c Kruthik b Patil 9 (38b, 1x4), Sukhdeep Singh Bajwa b Prasidh 20 (13b, 4x4), Anmoljeet Singh (not out) 0 (3b). Extras (LB-12, W-1) 13. **TOTAL (all out, 92 overs) 309**.

Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Prabhsimran), 2-108 (Saharan), 3-119 (Jashanpreet), 4-119 (Anmolpreet), 5-168 (Malhotra), 6-168 (Garg), 7-249 (Goyal), 8-272 (Brar), 9-301 (Bajwa).

Bowling: Prasidh Krishna 14-1-58-1, Vidyadhar Patil 16-4-52-4, Shikhar Shetty 15-2-54-0, Mohsin Khan 25-0-85-2, Shreyas Gopal 22-6-48-3.

KARNATAKA (I Innings): KL Rahul b Brar 59 (87b, 9x4), Mayank Agarwal c Jashanpreet b Chahal 46 (64b, 6x4), KV Aneesh c Prabhsimran b Brar 32 (75b, 3x4), Devdutt Padikkal c Jashanpreet b Brar 9 (18b, 2x4), R Smaran lbw Brar 9 (15b, 1x4), Shreyas Gopal (batting) 42 (124b, 3x4), Kruthik Krishna lbw Bajwa 28 (83b, 2x4, 1x6), Vidyadhar Patil (batting) 23 (56b, 4x4). Extras (B-2, LB-5) 7. **TOTAL (for 6 wkts, 87 overs) 255.**

Fall of wickets: 1-102 (Agarwal), 2-119 (Rahul), 3-137 (Padikkal), 4-151 (Smaran), 5-166 (Aneesh), 6-213 (Kruthik).

Bowling: Ayush Goyal 3-1-8-0, Sukhdeep Singh Bajwa 10-6-22-1, Harpreet Brar 27-3-101-4, Emanjot Singh Chahal 23-6-55-1, Anmoljeet Singh 23-5-55-0, Uday Saharan 1-0-7-0.

Other Elite Group B brief scores: At Indore: MP: 187 & 61/2 in 23 overs vs Maharashtra (O/n: 52/2): 179 all out in 54.3 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 27, Niraj Joshi 29, Ruturaj Gaikwad 46, Saurabh Nawale 29; Saransh Jain 2-53, Kumar Kartikeya 6-33). **At Chandigarh:** Chandigarh: 136 & 31/0 in 9 overs vs Saurashtra (O/n: 167/1): 453/3 decl in 106.1 overs (Harvik Desai 200 n.o., Jay Gohil 98, Arpit Vasavada 96). **At Porvorim:** Goa (O/n: 279/8): 355 all out in 110.4 overs (Suyash Prabhudesai 86, Snehal Kauthankar 29, Yash Kasvankar 50, Arjun Tendulkar 36, Samar Dubhashi 55 n.o.; Nedumankuzhy Basil 2-73, Ankit Sharma 6-115) vs Kerala: 237/2 in 58 overs (Rohan Kunnummal 132 n.o., Abhishek Nair 32, Sachin Baby 37, Salman Nizar 25 n.o.).

Bell hitting the right notes for RCB

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

Over the years, Royal Challengers Bengaluru's pace attacks have arrived at tournaments with a lot of hype but left with their reputation damaged.

However, in the ongoing Women's Premier League, they have transformed that image with bowlers being at the forefront of their march to the final, the second time in three editions.

While there might have been stutters along the way, Lauren Bell's quality with the ball has been giving RCB's bowling an identity shift.

The 25-year-old, who plays with RCB skipper Smriti Mandhana for Southern Brave in The Hundred, was picked up for Rs 90 lakh in the first-ever WPL mega auction last year.

Since the start of the competition, Bell has taken a wicket every 16 balls, picking up 12 at an average of 15 and an economy of 5.63.

To put it in perspective, only two bowlers in the top 20 wicket-takers' list have conceded runs under six an over.

In T20s, seamers who can move the ball both ways are always an asset, especially those who can do it from traditionally defensive lengths. Add to that Bell's tall frame (6-feet plus) and the ability to vary her pace, and you have a complete package.

The quality of Bell though is how her spells have been simple. The English import has dedicated bowling to Test match lines and lengths, especially in the powerplay.

Lauren Bell has picked up 12 wickets in eight matches for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the ongoing WPL. PTI

The plan has been straightforward. To right-handers, bowl one outswinger on a fuller length and invite the batter for the drive, then bowl one slightly shorter to push the batter onto the backfoot, and finally bowl one in the channel and try to induce a mistake.

And to left-handers, Bell has targeted the pads with deliveries that are much fuller, aiming to bring the keeper and slips into play. And the results have been outstanding. A whopping 116 dot-balls in the 32 overs across eight matches. And the next best is Marizanne Kapp with 89 dots.

Bell has also consistently bowled at least two overs of dot-balls in every game, averaging 14.5 dots per game. She has a dot-ball percentage of 60.4, which is also the highest in the competition for bowlers with 80 or more dot balls, and there are only three of them in the tournament.

"I have found a very nice rhythm and the ball is coming out really well. The main thing for me is clarity on my role and understanding what the team requires. I am happy to be able to contribute to the team and put in performances that help us get over the line," Bell said.

While Bell's new-ball bowling has garnered much attention, she has also delivered the goods at the death, extracting bounce with the older ball, using her height, and utilising the back-of-the-hand slower one to great effect.

While simplicity does not often reap its rewards in the T20 game, Bell has so far lived up to the team coach Malolan Rangarajan's pronouncement "fantastic signing" while keeping things very simple.

Ashwin, Shantagoud star for Indiranagar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Ashwin Kumar's 135-ball 100 and Shantagoud Patil's 4/23 powered Indiranagar Cricketers to a 125-run victory over New National Cricket Club in the KSCA Group I, Division V League Cum Knockout Cricket Tournament here.

Brief scores: Indiranagar Cricketers: 273/8 in 50 overs (Shiva Kumar N 27, Parth Patel 35, Ashwin Kumar 110, Aditya Santhosh 33; Saravanan S 2-57, Srikanth BN 2-40) bt New National CC: 148 all out in 31.4 overs (Sagar N 57; Ramanuja KS 2-39, Shantagoud Patil 4-23, Chandra Shekar 2-25).

Garfield Cricketers: 226 all out in 34.4 overs (Nikhil 60, Dhyan Suvarna 34, Anthony Premraj 41; V Varun Kaushik 2-32, Vineet Patil 3-31, Niraj V 2-33) bt Unique CC: 86 all out in 28.4 overs (Vineet Patil 26; Madhusudan TN 2-15, Arun Kumar C 2-18, Nandhish 3-9).

ACE Cricketers: 229 all out in 46.5 overs (Sai Srikanth 28, Sathish T 53, Poorna 60; Ganesh 2-29, Manoj Kumar SS 2-38, Sunil V Aekbote 3-14) bt Central College CC: 219 all out in 45 overs (Ganesh J 51, Sri Ram Jayanthi 32; Abhishek Bopanna 3-44, Abhilash R 2-21, Sai Vignesh Srikanth 2-26).

Government RC College: 105 all out in 29.5 overs (Kiran K 4-19, Thofique R 2-43, Anjan KT 2-24) lt to Hosakote CC: 106/2 in 12.5 overs (Kiran K 78 n.o.).

Young Cricketers (2): 350 all out in 50 overs (Lohith Gowda KR 92, Shivam Shrivastava 27, Paritosh Kumar 92, Athiqulla Khan 37; Chilukuri Praneeth 3-44, Prateek C 4-27) bt Bangalore Dynamos: 152 all out (Rohan Kamble 49; Paritosh Kumar 3-6).

United Cricketers: 167 all out in 47.4 overs (Ishaan Bohra 35, Raunak 39; Manjunath S 3-50, C Abilash 4-30) lt to Young Cricketers (1): 169/4 in 41 overs (Ajay B 67 n.o., Asit Kumar 75).

Diamond CC: 244 all out in 45.4 overs (Anil Kumar H 28, Aadrith 46, Amith Upadhya 34, Dinesh Raju S 49; Kishan KC 3-44, Kiran BK 2-38) bt Prathibhe Talented Trust: 182 all out in 42 overs (Surya Praveen 41; Aadrith 4-39).

Modern Cricketers: 127 all out in 42.2 overs (Sri Ram R Bedre 38, Abhishek 36; Karthik SK 2-17, Shiva Kumar SV 6-27) lt to Malleswaram SC: 129/3 in 20.1 overs (Vismai PM 43 n.o.; Abhishek 2-29).

City Cricketers (2): 244/9 in 50 overs (Bimal Kumar BK 30, Emon Bhanj 55, Pushkar Singh 41, Rahul Singh R 39 n.o.; Satish Y 2-30, S Charan 2-17, Vyshak Nagaraj 3-26) bt Young Challenging CC, Chintamani: 141 all out in 36 overs (S Charan 27, Sudeep M 45; Niranjan Gupta 2-31, Rahul Singh R 2-14, Pradeep Tamrakar 4-16).

Eagles soar on first-half show

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bangalore Eagles rode a strong first-half show to trounce DYES FC 4-1 in the BDFA A Division League Championships at the BFS here on Friday. Bharath M, Vinod B and Vijayakumar Rcontributed with goals in the win.

Results: Technico FF: 2 (Aaron Telaspher Rodriguez 10th, Rahul Chakravarti 74th og) bt Blitz FC: 1 (Bham Bani 84th og); Bangalore Eagles FC: 4 (Bharath M 11th, Vinod B 16th, Vijayakumar R 42nd, Shia Kumar R 75th) bt DYES FC: 1 (S Vedant Pandey 52nd); BTM FC: 2 (Sochan Shatsang 78th, Niran Jai Babu 87th) bt Roots FS: 1 (Thang 10th).

Vidyamandir emerge champs

BENGALURU, DHNS

LOCAL CRICKET

Kodatala Sai Shravan Reddy's four-wicket haul and teammate Atiksh Singh's three-for saw Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidyamandir, B'luru East edge The Sports School by just 13 runs and emerge champions of the KSCA under-14 II division school tournament for the BT Ramaiah Shield here.

Having called it right at the toss, Vidyamandir, riding batting efforts from Partha BN (33 runs, 54 balls) and Aarav Srivastava (27, 51b), could only manage 175 all out in 50 overs.

Rushikesh Pukale (2/22) and Sai Aarush Sangati (2/38) were the pick of the bowlers for The Sports School.

Chasing 176 for victory in the final, The Sports School found the going tough and were off to a disastrous start, losing five wickets for just 53 runs. Shravan (4/37) picked three of the top four batters while Atiksh (3/28) ably supported him as Lakshit Kumar Sipani's (60, 97b) fighting half-century could only take them to 162 all out in 44.1 overs.

Brief scores: Final: At BEL: Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidyamandir, B East: 175 all out in 50 overs (Aarav Srivastava 27, Partha BN 33; Rushikesh Pukale 2-22, Sai Aarush Sangati 2-38) bt The Sports School: 162 all out in 44.1 overs (Lakshit Kumar Sipani 60; Kodatala Sai Shravan Reddy 4-37, Atiksh Singh 3-28).

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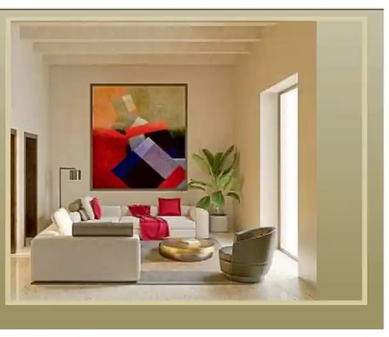

Shades of high energy

HOME FRONT P04

ADVERTORIAL & PROMOTIONAL LIFESTYLE FEATURE

CAULI POWER!

PAGE 02

WRAPPED IN STYLE

PAGE 03

SKINCARE ROUTINE

PAGE 04

Show Buzz | Tia Bajpai

'Music is a way of life for me...'

A singer and actor, Tia Bajpai has won acclaim on the television and big screen. Tia debuted in filmmaker Vikram Bhatt's film Haunted-3D, and appeared in 1920: Evil Returns, Lanka, Hate Story 4 and Baankey Ki Crazy Baraat.

Her telly kitty brings in multitude of outings in Ghar Ki Lakshmi Betiyann, Ssshhhh...Phir Koi Hai - Tum Meri Ho and Qayamat, reality show Kaun Jeetega Bollywood Ka and Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Challenge 2005.

Her latest soundtrack, Jugni, has been netting in resounding likes on YouTube.

Shilpi Madan caught up with her for this chat.

How has the journey been in Bollywood since Haunted-3D?
It's been an incredible journey, filled with both highs and lows, but I prefer to focus on the positives. Coming to Mumbai from Lucknow without any connections or backing was a challenge, but I trusted my talent and worked hard to carve my own path. Today, I'm proud to say that I've made my mark and am still going strong.

What does your heart want - Lucknow or Mumbai?
I have immense love for both cities. Lucknow is where I was born - the city is where my roots, and my foundation lie. Mumbai, on the other hand, is where I chose to build my dreams and create a home. Both hold a special place in my heart, and I cherish them equally for shaping different parts of my journey.

What would you choose - TV or films?
Both deserve equal respect, as actors in cinema and television work incredibly hard and have their own unique audiences. At the end of the day, both are artists dedicated to their craft. Comparing them undermines the essence of the art and the efforts of the artist. It's important to celebrate their talent without drawing unnecessary distinctions.

What made you take to singing?
Music has always been an intrinsic part of my life - something I was born with, almost like it's in my DNA. Both my parents are singers, so it feels like a gift from God that I've cherished deeply. While many skills can be learnt through courses and training, a truly beautiful voice is something you're born with - it's a natural blessing that can't be replicated any other way.

'Acting fuels my soul, singing ignites my life' reads your Instagram bio...
Acting feeds my soul, but singing sets my spirit on fire. Together, they're the perfect rhythm to my life. They define who I am.

What has been the response to Jugni?
The love Jugni has received is truly overwhelming. Garnering millions of views on YouTube within the first week and trending across social media is a testament to how deeply it has resonated with people. As an artist, there's nothing more fulfilling than seeing your work appreciated on such a massive scale. It's an incredible feeling - both humbling and euphoric - and I consider it a blessing to connect with audiences in this way.

Is singing in your genes?
Music runs in my blood, it's truly a part of who I am. Coming from a family of musicians, with both my parents deeply rooted in music, it feels like a legacy that's been passed down to me. It's not just a passion - it's in my DNA.

Your journey as a singer...
I started learning music at the age of three. My mother often tells me that even before I could speak, I would sit with her during riyaaz and try to sing along. I've trained in Indian classical music for 13 years, and riyaaz remains a daily ritual for me. Even on set, I make it a point to practice with my electronic tanpura. At home, I have a fully-equipped studio where I work on new compositions whenever inspiration strikes. Music isn't just a part of my routine, it's a way of life for me.

> It's essential to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and remain open to evolving both as an artist and as a person

A skill that you have picked up during shoots...
One skill I've mastered during shoots is the ability to switch my emotions on and off as needed. As an actor, it's crucial to have complete control over your mind, body and emotions. You need to deliver your best performance, even in the most challenging circumstances. Equally important is learning to leave the character behind once the shoot wraps and you're back home. It's this balance that keeps the craft rewarding and the mind at peace.

What has been the turning point in your career?
When I decided to step out of my comfort zone and take on roles that challenged me. It wasn't just about choosing projects, but about taking risks and pushing my boundaries as an actor. That shift in mindset opened doors to new opportunities and allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. Every role since has been a step forward, helping me redefine my craft and career.

Your fitness routine?
I focus more on maintaining a healthy lifestyle than following a strict fitness routine. I practice intermittent fasting, a 14-16 hour window, and complement it with light exercise four days a week. It's all about balance and consistency, ensuring I feel both energised and grounded.

What's the best part about being Tia Bajpai?
The perseverance and patience I have as an individual and the versatility and talent I possess as an artist.

You have 6.1 million followers on Instagram – it is a colossal following. What is your perception of social media and how do you use it to your advantage?
I personally see social media as a valuable professional tool. It has helped me connect with my fans and audience much easier. In the past, getting your work to people involved a lengthy process, but now, with just a few clicks, you can upload something from your phone and have it reach every corner of the world instantly.

What's been your biggest learning?
My biggest learning has been the importance of resilience and adaptability. The journey in this industry isn't always linear, and there are ups and downs. What truly matters is staying focused, trusting the process and learning from every experience. It's essential to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and remain open to evolving both as an artist and as a person.

What's next?
I have a few exciting projects lined up. I am filming for my next romantic movie. There's another horror film in the pipeline. Additionally, I have a lot of music ready to be released, so stay tuned for more.

Make time for me-time

Strike some things off your to-do list and get that much-needed work-life balance in 2026, advises **Shilpi Madan**

January, where did you go? With work anthems thickening, events to attend increasing and to-do lists becoming unending, the ease into the New Year has been a little overwhelming. Here's your guide to that much-needed work-life balance.

Make time
Nothing succeeds like a clever trifurcation of the day - into work time, me time and family time. You can strike off 20 things from your to-do list, spend moments with loved ones and create a bit of me-time too if you plan astutely.

Plot your calendar keeping in mind the age and demands of the children, your exercise schedule and family commitments.

Pick up a hobby
It could be pruning your potted plants on the window sill, a game of pickle ball over the weekend, colouring or knitting, reading, Pilates, power yoga, Zumba or listening to music. Go for it.

Set boundaries for when you switch off work in the evening, whether you work full time or from home. Do not take work calls after a particular hour. This communicates that you are unavailable 24 hours.

Weigh your options
Learn to say no. It leaves you feeling happier when there is no pressure to perform against your will. Reset boundaries with everyone to put yourself on top priority. Then practise something that creates a sense of calm for you every day. It could be lighting a lamp outside your home in the evening, enjoying the sight of the setting sun or getting down for a brisk walk every day.

Allocate work
Make sensible use of home staff. Divide chores among family members, instil a sense of independence in your children. For instance, instead of shouldering the responsibility of chauffeuring them around, form car-pools, encourage children in groups to walk, or take the Metro or a cab. It lifts the weight off your shoulders.

You do not have to do everything all the time. Make peace with a little bit of dust to shrug off your OCD!

Connections that matter
An occasional coffee with a friend, an impromptu after-dinner drive, a spontaneous cake-cutting to surprise a friend on a special occasion, a sudden plan to catch a movie... The element of fun makes you stay lively and engaged. The more you make time for human interaction and catching up with friends – laughing and sharing thoughts – the more relaxed you will be.

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DH DECCAN HERALD
Wknd. WELLNESS

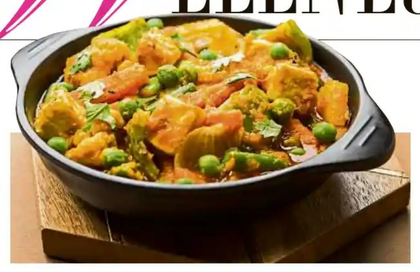
Around three cups of cauliflower a week gives you a good amount nutrition without its high fibre causing bloating and digestive issues

EAT RIGHT

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

SOURCE OF NUTRITION

Cauliflower is a great source of nutrition that must be a part of your diet. Regular consumption of this vegetable gives you the dose of fibre and Vitamin C you need apart from other nutrients. Also, cauliflower is low in calories. Therefore, it aids in weight management too. It is an ideal choice for those who are on a weight loss regimen.



BENEFITS OF CAULIFLOWER

- Its high fibre content supports digestion
- Boosts immunity as it has Vitamin C
- Its antioxidant properties reduce inflammation
- It strengthens bones with its minerals
- It helps in managing cholesterol

Cauliflower Pizza

What you need:
- One head of cauliflower and one egg
- Italian seasoning, salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:
Wash and cut the cauliflower into florets and pulse it into coarse 'rice texture'. Microwave this mixture in a bowl for 15 minutes at 375 F which is equivalent to high power mode. Cool the cooked cauliflower and transfer it into a cheesecloth. Hold the four corners of the cheese cloth in your hand and squeeze out as much water from the mixture as possible. You should finally have some very dry cauliflower mixture in the cheese cloth.

Transfer the cauliflower into a large bowl and break an egg into it. Add the seasoning you like along with salt and pepper to taste.

Line a round sheet pan with parchment paper and spread the cauliflower mix on it, using your hands to flatten the dough evenly onto the pan making sure the edges are as thin as the rest of the base.Bake the crust for about 20 minutes at 450 F or until it is golden brown and has crispy edges.

While the base is cooking, get the pizza toppings ready along with grated cheese.

For a simple mozzarella pizza, use grated mozzarella cheese, tomato slices and basil leaves to make a yummy cauliflower mozzarella pizza.

Cauliflower Fried Rice

If you want a substitute for rice in fried rice, cauliflower is your answer.

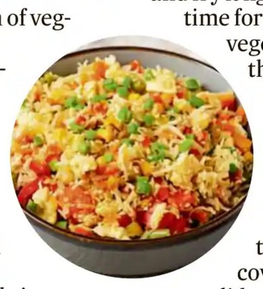
What you need:
- One head of cauliflower and one small red onion sliced thin
- One teaspoon of ginger garlic paste
- One cup of mixed vegetables finely diced
- One tablespoon of vegetable oil
- Salt and seasoning to taste

For seasoning mix:
Coriander powder, cumin powder, red chilli powder, pepper powder, clove and cinnamon (or you can use one teaspoon of garam masala)

Preparation - Cauliflower Rice
Wash and cut the cauliflower into florets and pulse it in a mixer until it is coarse and grainy like rice. Transfer it into a cheese cloth and squeeze out as much water as possible from the 'rice'. Set it aside.

Preparation - Fried Rice
Heat the oil in a large wok and fry the onion slices until golden brown. Next, add the ginger-garlic paste and fry it lightly. It is now time for the mixed vegetables. Saute the vegetables well and add the cauliflower rice. Stir fry lightly until the cauliflower becomes tender. You can cover the wok with a lid and let it cook on simmer. Add salt and seasoning of choice and mix the rice lightly.

Turn off the heat and garnish with chopped coriander leaves and spring onion.



Cauli Power!

Jayanthi Madhukar has three innovative recipes that bring out the fun side of cauliflower, a vegetable that offers many health benefits

Indian cuisine presents cauliflower flavoured with spices in curries and stuffings. However, using cauliflower as the base of your dish is just as tasty. A versatile vegetable, it can replace starchy potatoes, refined flour and white rice. Cauliflower thrives in high heat, roasted or sauteed, and tastes best caramelised to golden brown. Here are a few ideas that will keep your meal interesting and tasty.

Cauliflower Wings

What you need:
- One large head of cauliflower
- Three cups of all-purpose flour
- Quarter cup of cornstarch
- One teaspoon each of garlic powder, onion powder and paprika
Half a teaspoon of salt
Three-fourths cup of water

Preparation:
Wash and cut the cauliflower into large florets. Place the florets in a large bowl. Combine the seasoning of your choice with rice flour or all-purpose flour and water (you can substitute it with non-dairy milk) in another bowl. This will be the batter that will be used to coat the cauliflower florets so ensure it is thick in consistency. The cornstarch is added for extra crispiness.

Coat the cauliflower florets with the batter and place them in a single layer on a prepared baking tray lined with parchment paper. Bake them in a pre-heated oven at 450 F for 10 minutes before flipping them over and baking again for 10 minutes. Remove the tray from the heat and brush the cauliflower wings with a hot sauce of your choice. Bake for 10 more minutes or until the florets have become dark and crisp around the edges.

Serve the cauliflower wings with your favourite dip.

Nutrient-rich veggie

Cauliflower is a versatile vegetable which is nutrient-dense, easy to prep and quick to cook. Low in calories, rich in nutrients, it has numerous health benefits especially when included in a well-balanced diet. Packed with high fibre, vitamins (Vitamin C, K, folate and choline), minerals and phytonutrients, the vegetable can be eaten as a meal itself or as an accompaniment. Its high dietary fibre feeds beneficial gut bacteria, promotes bowel movement and helps reduce inflammation in the gut.

Medical and nutrition journals highlight its antioxidants and bioactive compounds, especially glucosinolates and sulforaphane, which help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation. Research also suggests cauliflower may help lower the risk of certain cancers by supporting detoxification processes and inhibiting abnormal cell growth. Regular consumption is associated with improved heart health through better cholesterol balance and blood vessel function.

LEISURE

Beetle Bailey

WHATCHA WRITING?
A NOTE TO MY MOM FOR MOTHER'S DAY
5/13
THAT'S NICE
YEAH, IT'S THE ONE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT I WRITE WITHOUT ASKING FOR MONEY
GREG + MORT WALKER
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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

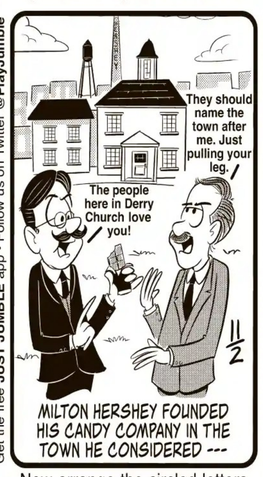
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LHIEW

PRHOM

ROCEEN

TMYESS


They should name the town after me. Just pulling your leg.
The people here in Derry Church love you!
MILTON HERSHEY FOUNDED HIS CANDY COMPANY IN THE TOWN HE CONSIDERED ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @Play-Jumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Answers: WHILE MORPH ENCORE SYSTEM
Milton Hershey founded his candy company in the town he considered — HOME SWEET HOME

HITORI-131

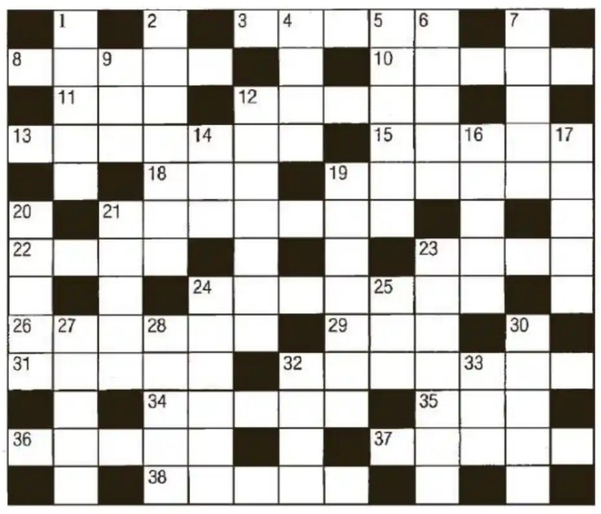
4	6	1	4	4	8	7	1
4	7	5	3	7	7	1	2
8	4	4	7	5	2	4	6
6	4	3	4	2	4	5	7
7	3	7	2	1	6	1	4
2	4	6	5	8	4	4	7
1	7	2	8	7	5	6	3
7	2	7	1	6	7	8	1

SOLUTION for HITORI-131

■	8	7	6	1	■	2	■
3	6	5	■	8	2	7	1
■	4	■	8	5	6	■	2
4	■	6	1	2	■	3	7
7	5	■	2	4	3	■	6
6	■	2	5	7	■	4	8
2	1	■	7	3	5	■	4
■	7	8	4	■	1	6	■

To solve the puzzle:
Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 132



EASY

ACROSS
3 Shut (5)
8 Outstanding (5)
10 Distinctive character (5)
11 Torn cloth (3)
12 End of life (5)
13 Be deceived by (4,3)
15 Conditions (5)
18 Fish (3)
19 Antenna (6)
21 Ceremonial staff (7)
22 Hotness (4)
23 Court card (4)
24 Woeful (7)
26 Border (6)
29 Weaken (3)
31 Guide (5)
32 Seaman (7)
34 Claw (5)
35 Gratuity (3)
36 Influence (5)
37 Native American tent (5)
38 Small coin (5)

DOWN
1 Wall painting (5)
2 Ignore (7)
4 Look lasciviously (4)
5 Couch (6)
6 Anaesthetic (5)
7 Punctuation mark (5)
9 Close friend (3)
12 Marine mammal (7)
14 Charge (3)
16 Competitor (5)
17 Satisfy (5)
19 Craftsman (7)
20 Vagaries (5)
21 Cavalry sword (5)
23 Planet (7)
24 Corsair (6)
25 Distant (3)
27 Reef (5)
28 Arise (3,2)
30 Ward off (5)
32 Grumble (4)
33 Pinch (3)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 Come down and get nothing in exchange (5)
8 Saint of the dance? (5)
10 Land or crash the plane (5)
11 Joe North's spirit (3)
12 If wrong, a chap gets punished (5)
13 An ass in Belgium (7)
15 Dragon country (5)
18 Not the whole area (3)
19 Though erotic, she was nothing for males to be mad about (6)
21 Play around in the corner, obviously (7)
22 The menagerie lake? (4)
23 Full of sauce during supper time (4)
24 There's a little thought for each cry (7)
26 If getting back into port, somehow, there's an advantage (6)
29 It's apt to become attached to you, naturally (3)
31 The stuff a saint is made of? (5)
32 Criticised a wild breed touring the kingdom (7)
34 Three could put you to sleep! (5)
35 It's bad when there's a missing part (3)
36 Where the French get sick at heart? (5)
37 Passes soccer supporters may be crying out for? (5)
38 Do they sound a bit clumsy to a doctor? (5)

DOWN
1 Indicates that one is literate? (5)
2 It's edgy where there's a chance of falling overboard (7)
4 Punitive politician? (4)
5 The only system for avoiding head-on collision? (3-3)
6 Something sustaining, perhaps, for the pianist (5)
7 Where to keep women in their place! (5)
9 A blue one is hardly great for the ornithologist (3)
12 Fighter adapted for shifting cargo (7)
14 A long time in the rain (3)
16 Figure in a new role as Romeo (5)
17 Stalls Tessa deviously! (5)
19 Rumbles terribly in one's sleep! (7)
20 Plenty of shape, perhaps (5)
21 Giver of guidance to one entering a scheme (5)
23 Pearl's upset about us having an examination (7)
24 Gain success over one's better half once a year (6)
25 Public figures absent from the boozer (3)
27 Quick to do something about a drip (5)
28 Distraught, I fled the scene of battle (5)
30 Did she finish in an out-of-the-way sort of house? (5)
32 Morning paper? Not entirely (4)
33 People of the inconclusive kind? (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 132

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 3, Sw-O-op 8, Vitus 10, Nepal 11, Gi-N 12, Fi-Ned 13, Antwerp 15, Wales 18, Are 19, Sal-O-me 21, Pla-in-L-y 22, Erie 23, Pert 24, Whim-per 26, Pro-fi-t 29, Bur 31, Satin 32, Reb-UK-ed 34, Ether 35, Sin 36, L-ill-e 37, Hands 38, Dr-ums.
DOWN: 1, Signs 2, Gunwale 4, Whip 5, One-way 6, Pedal 7, Harem 9, Tit 12, Freight 14, Era 16, Lo-V-er 17, Seats 19, Slumber 20, Heaps 21, P-I-lot 23, Per-us-al 24, Win-ter 25, Pub 27, Rapid 28, Field 30, W-end-y 32, Re-A.M. 33, Kin.

EASY
ACROSS: 3, Close 8, Super 10, Ethos 11, Rag 12, Death 13, Fall for 15, Terms 18, Eel 19, Aerial 21, Sceptre 22, Heat 23, Jack 24, Pitiful 26, Margin 29, Sap 31, Steer 32, Mariner 34, Talon 35, Tip 36, Clout 37, Tepee 38, Penny.
DOWN: 1, Mural 2, Neglect 4, Leer 5, Settee 6, Ether 7, Comma 9, Pal 12, Dolphin 14, Fee 16, Rival 17, Slake 19, Artisan 20, Whims 21, Sabre 23, Jupiter 24, Pirate 25, Far 27, Atoll 28, Get up 30, Repel 32, Moan 33, Nip.

DH DECCAN HERALD
Wknd. TREND

Indoor plants are great stress-busters that can elevate your mood and promote sound sleep

GREEN SHEEN

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

LIGHT IS CRUCIAL

This is the time to increase your indoor plants' exposure to sunlight. It is advisable to place the potted plants close to a window or under a skylight which allows sunlight in. Some plants need to be moved around so all branches receive sunlight. This promotes even growth and they won't 'lean' as they grow towards the light source.

FOCUS ON MAINTENANCE

Indoor plants need to be cared for. Watering is a crucial factor – too much is as bad as no water. Check soil condition and water accordingly. A liquid fertiliser keeps the soil good for the plant and boosts healthy growth. Keep the leaves free of dust for better absorption of light. Remove dead leaves and trim regularly.

Spring Blooms

Green Home

There's nothing like a spot of greenery for cheerful and bright indoors. And what better season than spring to plan your indoor plants? The decor aspect apart, indoor plants also help keep the air clean and some are known to have anti-microbial properties too. It's always good to have an indoor plant at home.

Snake Plant

This variety is very popular as an indoor plant simply because it is easy to grow, low in maintenance and adds to the decor element. It is known to filter the indoor air and absorb toxic pollutants. It is pleasing to look at and is considered a stress-buster by many. You can have this plant both in living spaces and in balconies.

PEACE LILY

This variety is an exclusively indoor plant. It is quite common as it is easy to maintain. However, you need to keep a close watch for insects it may attract. Peace Lily is known to be a natural air purifier. It is also popular indoors as it breaks down and absorbs toxic gases in the air. It also boosts humidity indoors.

SPIDER PLANT

Many consider this plant lucky for a home as it symbolises good fortune and prosperity. It is very pleasing to look at and therefore considered a mood-booster too. An easy-to-maintain variety, its aesthetic appeal and versatility make it very popular. You can place this plant in any corner of your home.

Philodendron

This is a very popular variety with first-timers planning greenery indoors. It is easy to maintain and can be placed anywhere at home. This plant too is known to purify the air indoors. It comes in two varieties – potted plant and vine that you can grow on a trellis. This plant should never be over-watered.

Wrapped in style

Skirts are perennials in the fashion world. **Jayanthi Madhukar** presents a few styles

Fashion Notes

Skirts have always remained in fashion, transcending seasons with versatility. Styling a skirt is a fine act with a play on its hemline and proportions. Textures make a significant impact with brands leaning towards denim, distressed leather and other unexpected fabrics to elevate the everyday wear into statement dressing. Whether pared-down minimalism or bold maximalism, fashioning a skirt is all about elegance and style.

Wrap skirt

Wrap skirt recalibrates the silhouette. Unlike skirts built around zippers or rigid closures, they fasten with ties or buttons, allowing the garment to be adjusted freely. That flexibility is part of their appeal explaining their enduring reputation of being flattering to all.

In lightweight fabrics like silk or cotton voile, a wrap skirt is apt, suited to warm weather and movement. Paired with a plain cotton T-shirt, it transforms easily into a functional, unfussy and intentional outfit.

In sturdier materials such as denim or suede, however, the same silhouette shifts its look. The skirt takes on structure which goes well with a tailored shirt or a defined top. The look becomes an elevated fashion choice.

The length of a wrap skirt, like other designs, is negotiable. They function as well above the knee as they do around the ankle, though longer versions often rely on a pronounced slit to preserve motion. It is this adaptability of fit, fabric and form which keeps the wrap skirt relevant, season after season.

Asymmetrical skirt

This style is all about fashion since the hemline isn't straightforward, creating visual interest. The uneven hem be it slanted, high-low, or made from different panels creates a dynamic, yet structured silhouette. A skirt with a high front and low back is considered classic asymmetrical shape while a sharp cut and diagonal panels make it sculptural and hi-fashion.

Styling an asymmetrical skirt appropriately creates interesting looks. For instance, a structured top or blouse makes the outfit look intentional and stylish while a fitted T-shirt and informal blazer can give it a casual look.

Straight skirt

A straight cut skirt is simple, yet difficult in styling. It falls straight down from the hips without tapering at the hem. With a slit, usually at the back or side for easy movement, the straight skirt gives little room for mistakes.

There are a few variations of this style. If it hugs and tapers, it is a pencil skirt. If it falls straight and simple, it's a column skirt. The difference is simply the length. Style a straight skirt with a minimal top that's slightly relaxed to break the monotony of the silhouette. A turtleneck or mock turtle-neck top will elongate and complement the look. A pencil skirt, if it is short, can be paired with a formal shirt or blouse.

Ruffles and pleats skirt

This fun-loving maximalist skirt is high-street fashion. The style can carry off bold patterns and proportions creating a dynamic look. Depending on the occasion, pair it with a linen shirt or spaghetti top for an interesting look.

This season, the trend favours patterned fabrics and exaggerated proportions, allowing the skirt to dominate the outfit. Designers are pairing them with restrained tops such as linen shirts, fitted tees and spaghetti tops to balance the silhouette. Fabrics and lengths are key to this style.

Lightweight chiffon and cotton enhance motion while satin and suede give structure. Midi and maxi versions look romantic, while shorter skirts lean towards a casual look.

All set for the spring-summer season?

Shilpi Madan has some tips to help you tweak your wardrobe for the season

Fashion Forward

Get your game right with these prims and prompts to your wardrobe as you bring in the sharp looks this season. Here's your easy guide to a spring-ready collection.

Get your stripes straight

Celebrate the stripes. Whether it is a tigerish touch, a leopard print, zebra lines or snaky swirls. Restrict the element to only a single focal point in your appearance – whether it is a pair of pumps, a stylish handbag or a form-fitting singlet below a light blazer.

Too much is overkill, especially when you are in office.

In black and white

Nothing succeeds like the classic spin on these two colours. With Cloud Dancer the Pantone colour of the year 2026, team up an ivory shirt with flattering trousers in raven. White brings in an elegant complexion. Ensure the white is bereft of blemishes.

Sheer appeal

Translucence brings in a spot of feminine charm. Whether it is net, organza, lace or chiffon, sleeve detailing brings in sheer elegance with a singlet coupled below. Bring on the sheer dresses with slips and dramatic capes.

Colour up

With the year of the Sun spelling a burst of oranges, pinks and yellows, celebrate the colour as a happy lining to your outfit. Scarlett demands strong energy to carry the colour off to its fullest charm. Coral wings in as the cheerful contender with its burnt orange mode and light marigold hues wooing in happiness.

Vintage alert

A beautiful blend of the old with the new succeeds. Bring in the antique element through a prized heirloom in a neck piece or your grandmother's purse, a hand-embroidered shawl or a pair of vintage chandelier earrings.

The Wellness Co: Merging technology with hospitality for immersive wellness

For decades, healthcare in India has been largely reactive - centred on hospitals, diagnoses and treatment after illness strikes. But as lifestyles grow more demanding and awareness around preventive health deepens, a shift is underway. Increasingly, Indians are asking a different question – 'how do we stay well, recover better and perform at our best'.

At the forefront of this shift is The Wellness Co., offering a comprehensive list of USFDA, CE and ISO approved therapies all under one roof, in a medically supervised format. Leading the brand are brothers Rishabh Jain and Rohan Jain, young entrepreneurs who are redefining wellness in India by making it a proactive, science-led part of everyday life, rather than an occasional medical intervention.

The brothers' entry into the wellness space did not stem from a passing trend. For Rishabh, a lifelong sports enthusiast, exposure to high-performance training and recovery revealed a stark gap between India's and global wellness ecosystems. Together, Rishabh and Rohan set out to build wellness clinics focused on optimising the body's core systems - oxygenation, hydration and circulation - key pillars increasingly linked to long-term health and resilience.

With 14 state-of-the-art centres across eight cities, The Wellness Co. merges technology with hospitality to offer a deeply immersive wellness experience. It offers globally-approved therapies such as cryotherapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, EMS training, IV drips, red light therapy, infra sauna and more. These therapies, once associated with elite sport and international wellness hubs, are now being accessed by working professionals, fitness enthusiasts and individuals seeking preventive care.

The brothers' entrepreneurial vision extends beyond wellness clinics. They are also the co-founders of PureFoods, a gluten- and lactose-free health foods brand aimed at addressing everyday nutritional challenges faced by urban Indians.

Looking ahead, The Wellness Co. is focused on deepening its science-led approach to wellness through the introduction of advanced diagnostic tools and next-generation wellness protocols, enabling hyper-personalised plans for its clientele. It is also transitioning from standalone sessions to structured, outcome-driven programmes, with protocol-based offerings such as 30-day wellness journeys and executive stress detox programmes.

The brand is also developing a wellness retreat concept that blends hospitality with integrated wellness in key markets such as Bengaluru and Gurgaon.

Rohan Jain (left) and Rishabh Jain, co-founders, The Wellness Co.

DH DECCAN HERALD
Wknd. VARIETY

Go for a drink that is nutrition-rich, low in calories and has no artificial additives. Avoid using sugar as a sweetener

HEALTHY SIP

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

WARM ALMOND MILK

It's a great beverage that comes with many health benefits. Almond helps control blood sugar levels with its high fibre and healthy fats. It is also rich in Vitamin E and antioxidants. It is good for the skin, hair and brain function. Avoid infusing this beverage with sugar.

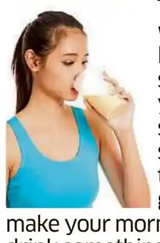
CHICKPEA MILK

This is a very nutritious drink. Chickpea is high in fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals. This beverage helps boost bone strength, gives you energy and reduces the risk of certain chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes. It also helps control blood sugar levels and aids in weight management.

Smart Sips

Immunity boosters

It's around now that the season changes. Much of the cold melts away as spring-summer begins to step in.



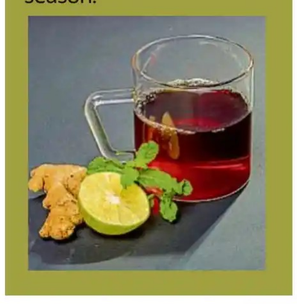
The changing weather can lead to the sniffles if your immune system isn't strong. It's therefore a good idea to make your morning warm drink something that boosts your immunity. Go for one that's infused with spices for that nutrition boost.

TURMERIC MILK

A strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory spice, turmeric gives you plenty of health benefits. It is good for those with pain in the joints, allergies and any infection. Milk on the other hand is rich in protein, calcium and vitamins. Together, they give you the nutrition you need to keep infections away.

GINGER LEMON TEA

This is a good option that boosts immunity. Choose this drink instead of a sugary beverage any time of the day. Ginger is a medicinal herb that helps boost immunity and strengthens digestion. Lime is rich in Vitamin C and helps fight colds. This is a good daily drink through this season.



Cinnamon Herbal Tea

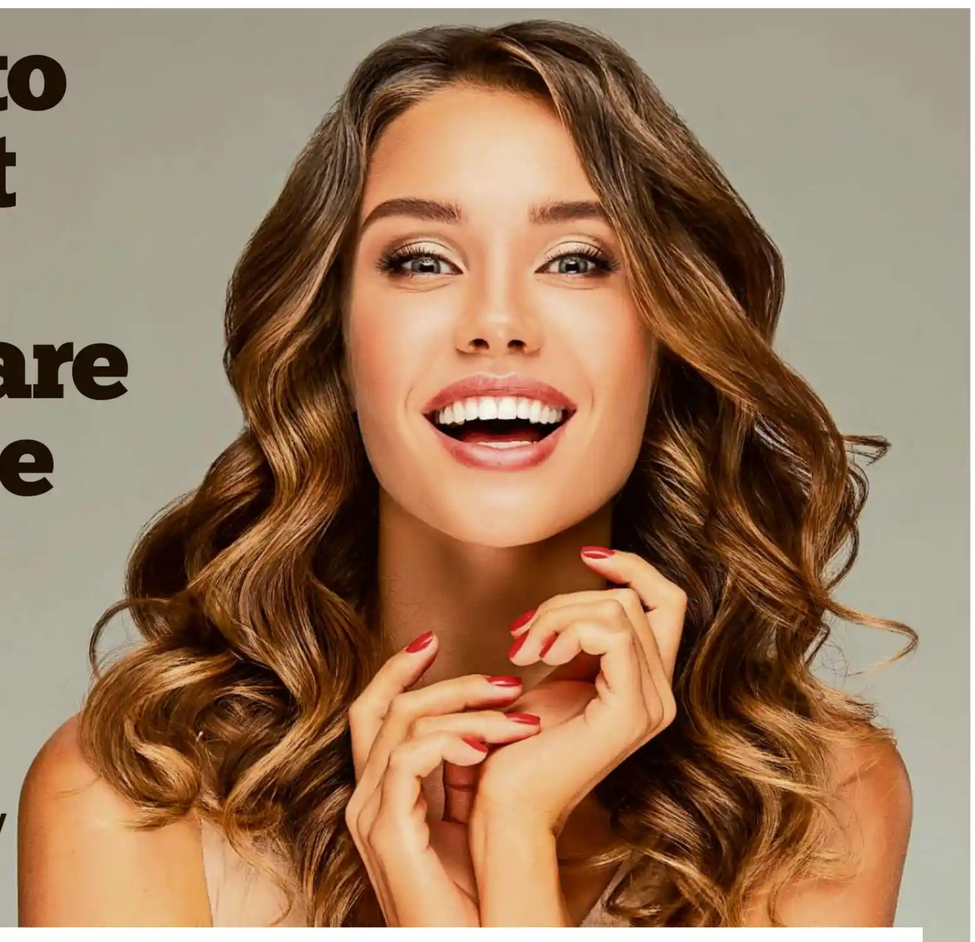
Another good tea for the season. Cinnamon offers many health benefits. It is rich in antioxidants, has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, and helps manage cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Cinnamon is known to promote cardiac fitness, aid digestion and protect against chronic diseases.

WARM APPLE CIDER

This beverage gives you a feeling of fullness, aiding in weight management. It is known to have anti-microbial properties. It supports skin and hair health. It also helps in lowering cholesterol levels and promotes heart health.

Time to reboot your skincare routine

Your skincare regimen needs to change with the receding winter and onset of spring, says consultant dermatologist **Dr Mukta Sachdev**



As you step into spring, your skin also feels the change. After months of winter dryness, heavy creams and dull-looking skin, spring brings warmer temperatures, more humidity and better sun exposure. This seasonal shift means your skincare and make-up routines also need a refresh - especially for darker skin tones, which respond differently to climate changes.

Why spring makes a difference

During winter, the skin barrier tends to become dry and fragile. In spring, rising humidity improves hydration, but increased heat and sun exposure can trigger oiliness, acne, pigmentation and tanning. For darker coloured skin, a change in routine skincare is particularly important because you are more prone to uneven pigmentation, melasma and post-acne marks.

Spring is therefore the ideal time to rebalance, not overload, your skin.

Update your routine

Switch to lighter moisturisers. Heavy winter creams can clog pores in warmer weather. Opt for lightweight gels, lotions or serum-based moisturisers that hydrate without feeling greasy. Ingredients like hyaluronic acid, niacinamide and ceramides work well for most skin types.

Make-up tips for spring

- Your make-up should feel fresh, breathable and skin-like.
- Replace heavy foundations with a BB cream, skin tint or lightweight foundation.
- Tinted sunscreen or moisturiser is an excellent multi-tasker for daily wear.
- Choose a cream-based blush and highlighter for a natural glow.
- Avoid very matte or cakey products, as they can highlight dryness or uneven texture.

If you have pigmentation or melasma, make-up is not just cosmetic - it's also a form of camouflage that boosts confidence, which is an important part of skin health.

Sunscreen is non-negotiable

The sun may feel pleasant in spring, but its UV rays are strong and can worsen pigmentation. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30–50) every morning, even on cloudy days.

For skin of darker colours, a sunscreen with iron oxides or tinted sunscreen offer extra protection against visible light, which plays a major role in pigmentation.

Gentle exfoliation helps

Winter can leave behind dead skin cells, making skin look dull. Gentle exfoliation once or twice a week helps brighten the skin and allows products to work better. Avoid harsh scrubs. Mild chemical exfoliants are safer, especially if you have pigmentation-prone skin.

Don't ignore antioxidants

Spring pollution and sun exposure increase oxidative stress. Using a Vitamin C or antioxidant serum in the morning can help protect the skin, improve its glow and support pigmentation control.

Listen to your skin

Spring is not about doing more to your skin - it's about doing what is right. Keep your routine simple, consistent and protective. Listen to your skin, protect it from the sun and remember that healthy skin always looks better than heavily covered skin.

With the right care, spring is a season when your skin looks fresh, balanced and naturally radiant.

Shades of high energy

Shilpi Madan finds out how you can give your living spaces a positive vibe

Home Front

As the New Year gets on, bring in a fresh vibe to your personal spaces by balancing energies. Here are some easy ways to align yourself with that much-needed positivity.

Colour speak

"Colours carry frequencies that interact directly with mind and body. For example, red can magnify and activate energy. It is stimulating and can be overpowering if not placed correctly. The colours yellow and orange are neutral, uplifting and bring warmth and clarity to a heavy or stagnant space. And, while violet and purple can assist spiritual seekers in deepening their awareness, they also require grounding when placed with earthy tones. Colour isn't decoration – it's calibration, fine-tuning your home's emotional and energetic temperature," says Neeta Sinha, an astroarchitect.

Mirror up

"Never place a mirror facing your bed," advises Vaastu expert Shona Desai. "It brings in unwanted complexities in your personal life. A mirror facing the front door of your house also creates a loss of energy. Hang one on a wall in the lobby or the living area to creative expansive spaces, visually. It is not advised to retain a cracked mirror within the premises."

The flow of natural light into your home together with the clever use of glass and reflective surfaces, fills the spaces with warmth and sunlight.

Remember...

- This year is considered 'the year of the sun'. Bring in pops of orange, yellow and pink to mark spaces.
- Keep the background neutral. Cloud-dancer is the favoured colour in 2026.
- Listen to your intuition to create that harmonious vibe.

Go green

Green is the colour of life and lends a lively edge to any space through the inclusion of plants. Certain leaves like the spider plant, function as space-purifiers.

"The presence of tulasi in your house brings in good energy," says Shona. "Jade and money plant are carriers of positive vibes and create a sense of harmony when celebrated in your home." Remember to trim yellowing leaves and remove dry, withered growth from your spaces to clear blockages and welcome positive energy.

Icy care!

Deepa Natarajan Lobo outlines how cold therapy just before make-up helps

Make up

Long before movie stars made ice facials a red-carpet ritual, cold therapy had a rich global legacy. Ancient Romans soaked in frigidarium pools after hot baths to invigorate the body, while in Japan, cold-water immersion was used for purification and resilience and later, gave birth to modern cryotherapy.

Today, the power of cold is no longer confined to spas or snow-covered lakes in distant continents, it can be experienced at home with a simple bowl of ice water and dipping your face in it. What does facial icing actually do and who should be careful?

Boosts circulation

"Since cold makes blood vessels constrict and then rapidly dilate, dipping your face in a bucket of ice water can boost blood circulation. This rush of oxygenated blood makes dull, fatigued skin look instantly brighter, pinker and more awake", says Rashida Pavthiwala, a make-up artist and stylist. "It's logical - cold contracts the skin and wakes it up," she elaborates. "This is why celebrities take to it before a major event. Even for brides, the ice dip gives a very fresh, natural glow. So, they don't have to rely on heavy make-up for the big day," she adds.

Ultimate de-puffer

Late nights, constant travel and lack of sleep can lead to fluid retention in the face, especially around the eyes. Cold helps contract blood vessels and reduces this swelling, making facial contours appear sharper and more rested.

"Facial icing helps reduce puffiness and fluid retention, especially around the eyes, and gives an instant glow before make-up," explains Dr Varshini Reddy, dermatologist.

Tighter skin

One of the most noticeable effects of icing is tighter-looking skin, points out Dr Varshini. "It temporarily tightens the skin and reduces pore size, which makes make-up sit better. This is why cryo rollers and ice dips are popular right before events and photoshoots," she reveals. "Facial icing can control excess sebum and, in some cases, help calm inflamed acne," she says, pointing out that it can also soothe mild redness and irritation when used correctly.

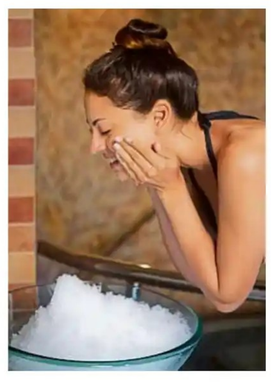
Gentler alternatives

The biggest risk with facial icing is overdoing it. Direct ice can cause micro-burns and damage the skin barrier if held too long. "Cryo rollers and cryo sticks are the safest because they are designed for skin. Direct ice baths should only be for a few seconds at a time," says Dr Varshini while Rashida suggests gentler alternatives like chilled rose water spray for daily use.

"Direct contact with ice can also trigger sinus. So, one can start with cold shower or a cold-water face dip before moving on slowly to an ice dip. A cold spray with rose water also works wonders for the skin", says Rashida.

How often?

Cryo rollers or sticks are extremely safe and can be used daily or a couple of times a week, advises Dr Varshini. "An ice bath for the face can be done before make-up for special events. A very short contact time should be maintained," she advises.

Ice your face safely

- Use a cryo roller or cryo stick instead of raw ice if you are hesitant
- Beginners can also start with cold water dips or showers before moving on to ice dips
- If dipping, limit contact to a few seconds at a time
- Always apply on clean skin
- Follow with moisturiser to protect the skin
- Try chilled rose water for daily use
- Avoid if you have rosacea, sunburn or sensitive skin